MY OWN STORY

Victoria Mafalda

EX-CROWN PRINCESS OF SAXONY

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Luisa of Tuscany.

MY OWN STORY

BY

LOUISA OF TUSCANY

EX-CROWN PRINCESS OF SAXONY

TORONTO

THE MUSSON BOOK CO. LTD.

1911

This edition for sale in Canada only

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PREFATORY STATEMENT

I HAVE frequently been urged to make a public repudiation of the various inaccurate statements which, for nearly ten years, have been circulated regarding my life and actions.

Hitherto I have maintained silence, because I have disdained to reply to those who have maligned me. It has, however, been indicated to me that as my sons are now approaching an age when the mendacious assertions in question may be communicated to them, it is my duty, as their mother, to make public the actual reasons which led to my leaving Dresden, and to my ultimate banishment from Saxony.

That is my principal motive in publishing my own recital of the facts, and I am likewise desirous that future historians of the Houses of Saxony and Habsburg should not perpetuate errors through lack of contradiction on my part.

I also wish to give an unqualified denial to the

prevalent assumption that I am the author of "Confessions of a Princess." I neither wrote the work, nor supplied, directly or indirectly, any of the material it contains, and I am at a loss to understand how any woman could be credited with writing such a revolting account of her amours.

In conclusion my thanks are due to my dear friend Mrs. Maude Mary Chester ffoulkes for her kindness in helping me to prepare my book for the press.

LOUISA OF TUSCANY

CHAPTER I

My birth and parentage : The Grand Dukes of Tuscany: How a princess became the mother-in-law of her own sister : My father's childhood : The Pitti Palace : Gloomy grandeur : Love laughs at locksmiths : My father's first marriage; his wife's death : The Grand Ducal family leave Florence : "One longing, lingering look behind" : My father's second marriage : My mother and her family

I WAS born at the Imperial Castle of Salzburg on September 2, 1870. My father was Ferdinand IV., Grand Duke of Tuscany, and my mother was Princess Alice of Parma.

Genealogical details are frequently dull, so I do not propose to write at any great length about my family history. My father's ancestors had reigned in Tuscany since the death of Gian Gastone, the last Medicean Grand Duke, in 1737, when Francis, Duke of Lorraine, and his wife the Archduchess Maria-Theresa, assumed the sovereignty until the death of Charles VI. made them Emperor and Empress of Austria. Their second son Pietro-Leopoldo then took the title of Grand Duke, and he was succeeded by his son

Ferdinand III. who had married Princess Louisa-Maria-Amalia of Naples. Ferdinand, who was the first Sovereign to enter into diplomatic relations with the French Republic, died in 1824, and his son, afterwards Leopold II., was my paternal grandfather.

Leopold being very delicate as a young man, it was considered desirable that he should marry early, with the object of securing the succession. Princess Maria-Anna-Carolina of Saxony was chosen for his future wife, and negotiations between the two Courts resulted in a marriage by proxy taking place at Dresden in 1817.

The princess, a highly nervous girl, was so terrified at the idea of meeting her unknown bridegroom that she refused to leave Dresden unless accompanied by her sister, to whom she was devotedly attached; and cajoleries and threats failed to change her decision.

The two girls, therefore, arrived at Florence, and the unexpected happened, for the old Grand Duke Ferdinand III., who was a widower of sixty-nine, fell in love with the unmarried princess. He shortly afterwards married her, and in this way she became the mother-in-law of her own sister.

Two daughters were born of my grandfather's first marriage; one died when she was sixteen,

and the other, Princess Augustine, married the present Prince Regent of Bavaria, who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday. In 1833 my grandfather married again, his second wife being Marie-Antoinette, daughter of Ferdinand III., King of Naples, and his wife Caroline, a sister of the ill-fated Marie-Antoinette of France.

Queen Caroline seems to have possessed considerable individuality, and she must have been a woman of exceptional courage and iron constitution, for she insisted on accompanying her husband to the wars, and rode by his side, indifferent to discomfort and fatigue. She had sixteen children and nursed them all herself; the youngest infant went through these campaigns with her, in charge of a nurse, and the Queen used to dismount at intervals and suckle her baby, sitting by the roadside, undisturbed by wars or rumours of wars. Her last child was in fact almost born on horseback.

Napoleon Bonaparte found an unexpected champion in this strange woman who was the grandmother of Marie-Louise. She had always regarded him as her peculiar enemy, but after his downfall she was touched with compassion, and strongly resented the efforts made by the Viennese Court to separate him from his wife. "Il fallait," she declared, "que Marie-Louise attachât les draps de son lit à sa fenêtre et s'échappât sous un déguisement."

My grandmother had ten children, my father being the eldest. I have dim recollections of her, but she did not emulate her mother, the redoubtable Caroline, in a single trait; she was stiff, a slave to etiquette and a bigoted Catholic, entirely in the hands of the priests. She was, however, intelligent. We were always very much afraid of her, and she was mean to miserliness; indeed, to dine with grandmother meant getting hardly anything to eat. She died near Salzburg in 1898, a lonely, colourless woman; and heredity, so strong in our family, gave to her children the individuality she had been denied.

My father's childhood was passed in Florence at the Pitti Palace, which George Eliot has described as "a wonderful union of Cyclopean massiveness with stately regularity." The story goes that Luca Pitti, the opponent of the Medici, built it to out-rival the Strozzi Palace, and he is said to have boasted during a banquet that he would build a palace with a courtyard which would alone be able to contain the whole of the Palazzo Strozzi. The building was not completed until the middle of the sixteenth century, when it came into the possession of Eleanor of Toledo, the wife of Duke Cosimo I, and it was thenceforward the home of the Medici until my ancestors became Grand Dukes of Tuscany.

The Pitti is too well known to need detailed

description. It has always struck me as imposing in its cold way, but I do not think it could ever have been a "home" for its occupants. The salons are splendid, the art treasures are wonderful; but it is cheerless, and the only rooms in it which I ever covet are the tiny boudoir and bathroom of Marie-Louise, which are decorated and furnished in the best Empire style.

My grandfather's Court was as gloomy as the Palazzo Pitti itself, and the Grand Ducal children were brought up most strictly. At five o'clock every morning they were expected to say "Bon jour" to their parents, a proceeding which entailed much ceremony. They were taken to an ante-room adjoining their parents' bedroom, and with their governesses and tutors in close attendance the little princes stood on one side of the salon and the little princesses on the other. All conversation was forbidden, and when five o'clock struck, the Groom of the Chambers threw open the great doors and they walked in solemnly and kissed their parents' hands. Coffee was then served, and the children took formal leave and went to their lessons. Ten o'clock was the luncheon hour, when all the family met, and my great-aunt Princess Louisa was always much in evidence. She was a dwarf, with the crooked, malicious mind that so often goes with a crooked body. She had very long, monkey-like arms, and whenever she was

displeased she would fling them out like the sails of a windmill and hit whichever of her ladies-in-waiting happened to be standing nearest to her. She was an odious little creature and hated everybody who was young and pretty, with the result that she was cordially detested even by her own relations.

After lunch the children played in the Boboli Gardens, which were then better kept up than they are to-day. I shall always remember how disappointed an English friend of mine was when I took her to see the gardens for the first time. She is a romantic person, who quite expected to see something very beautiful and not the badly trimmed hedges and ragged grass which met her horrified gaze.

At eight o'clock came the *dîner de cérémonie*, which the children heartily enjoyed, as they had had no food since ten o'clock in the morning, and my father has often told me how ravenously hungry they used to become.

Papa was a handsome young man with black curling hair, brown eyes, and an amiable expression. He was of medium height, slender and well knit, full of energy, and possessed the best disposition in the world. He was very clever, and acquired any number of accomplishments, as well as being proficient in the more serious studies which his future position required.

Like most of the Habsburgs, papa was always attracted by a beautiful woman, and he fell in and out of love very easily. At the age of eighteen he had an *affaire de cœur* with a *petite bourgeoise*, who lived near the Pitti Palace; but directly it was discovered he was shut up in his rooms for a fortnight, and forbidden to see or to correspond with the fair one. At last the youthful lover discovered a means of communicating with his inamorata. He procured a large sheet of cardboard, on which he cut out the letters of the alphabet, and covered over the cut-out portions with transparent paper. When night fell he placed the sheet of cardboard before his open window, put a lighted candle behind certain letters until he had completed a word, and in this ingenious way conveyed his messages to the girl, who stood in the street facing the palace.

Papa was only twenty-one when he married Princess Anna, the daughter of King John of Saxony, who translated Dante under the *nom de plume* of "Philaletes." Anna's mother, Queen Amelia, was a daughter of Prince Maximilian of Bavaria, and a twin out of two sets of twin girls. Her own twin, Princess Elizabeth, married Frederick William IV., King of Prussia; the other twins, Sophia and Marie, married respectively the Archduke Franz-Karl (father of the present Emperor of Austria) and Frederick-

August II., King of Saxony, and it is thus remarkable that two sisters became in turn Queens of the same country.

Princess Anna captured all hearts on her arrival in Florence, and when she died in Naples, three years after her marriage, from typhoid fever contracted through eating oysters, she was universally and unfeignedly lamented. Her little daughter, Marie-Antoinette, was taken to Saxony and brought up by her grandparents at Dresden until she was fourteen, when her father re-married. She was a gifted girl with a charming talent for versifying, but she died of consumption at Cannes in all the promise of her youth and beauty.

My family's connection with Tuscany as reigning Grand Dukes terminated after the defeat of the Austrians at Solferino. The terms of the Peace of Villa Franca compelled the Emperor to surrender Lombardy to Victor Emmanuel and also to consent to the incorporation of Tuscany into the Italian dominion. My grandfather was intensely Austrian at heart, and he refused to consider any decree which made him a constitutional Sovereign. The political situation became so menacing that the Grand Ducal family had to leave Florence in precipitate haste on April 27, 1859. The fugitives were my grandfather and grandmother, my

father, then a widower of twenty-four, and his little one-year-old girl, my aunts and uncles, and the widow of the old Grand Duke. It was a magnificent day, intensely hot, with cloudless azure skies, and as the carriages containing the Royal Family left the Pitti Palace, crowds thronged the streets and impeded the horses' progress. The Florentines viewed their Grand Duke's departure quite calmly, many saying with smiling affability which greatly enraged my grandfather, "Addio Babbo Leopoldo."

The travelling carriages soon left Florence far behind, and only clouds of dust showed the road taken. The state of the Grand Ducal family was not an enviable one, for they had left home so hurriedly that they had no personal belongings of any kind, and everything, even to baby clothes, had to be bought *en route*.

The gorgeous tapestries, exquisite pictures, jewels, enamels, gold and silver plate and art treasures of every description were left behind at the Pitti; and when King Victor Emmanuel went to the palace he slept between sheets embroidered with the arms of the fugitive duke.

When the unhappy exiles reached the heights from which a beautiful view of Florence is obtained, my grandfather ordered the carriages to stop, and he and his family alighted in order to take a last farewell look at their home. They were all

very much affected, and with one accord broke down and wept bitterly. They sat by the roadside in a tearful row and endeavoured to recover their composure, but when my aunt proceeded to dry her tears the awful fact was discovered that no one in the party had a pocket handkerchief. This was certainly unpleasant, for the tears, coursing down cheeks already covered with dust, had left dirty and gritty channels which did not improve the appearance of the "illustrious" family who were in despair at their ridiculous position. The situation, however, was saved by my grandmother, who on this occasion displayed a little of her mother's originality. Lifting her voluminous skirts, she took a corner of her equally voluminous lace petticoat and with extreme care and delicacy proceeded to wipe away the tears and dust from the faces of her family, until, at last, somewhat more *soignés* they re-entered their carriages and continued their flight.

After leaving Tuscany my grandfather bought the castle of Brandeis in Bohemia, and another residence near Carlsbad called Schlakenwerth, where he spent much of his time. My father visited Schönbrunn, but he was very unsettled and miserable, and finally went to Bavaria. He spent his summers on the Lake of Constance, where Princess Luitpold had a villa, and

eventually built a villa for himself, on quite original lines, at Lindau. He would not employ an architect, but had the work carried out under his own directions by an engineer and a few workmen. Papa's interest in house building did not, however, commend itself to my grandfather, who wished him to marry again.

The Grand Duke always hoped to be re-established in Tuscany, so he strongly urged my father to look out for an eligible princess, and he, like a dutiful son, at once commenced a round of visits "with a view to matrimony." His choice fell on Princess Alice of Parma whom he met at the house of her uncle the Comte de Chambord, who resided at Frohsdorf near Vienna.

Princess Alice was the daughter of Louisa Duchess of Parma, whose mother was the Duchesse de Berri. She had married Duke Charles of Parma when a mere girl, and her handsome but flighty husband was murdered (some say at the instigation of a gentleman jealous of his wife's honour), at the early age of thirty-two.

Troubles broke out in Parma which eventually ended in a revolution, and the Duchess with her four children fled in disguise to Switzerland, where they lived for two years, practically penniless, in a tiny house near Zurich. Things changed however for the better, and the Duchess bought the castle of Wartegg near Rorschach on the Lake of

Constance; but she did not like Switzerland, possibly on account of some unpleasant memories, so she went to Venice, where she bought the Palazzo Cavalli in order to be near her half-brother who lived there. The Duchess died at Venice of typhoid fever at the age of forty-two, and her illness was so sudden that she did not see her children before her death, as the girls were at the Sacré Cœur Convent near Bregenz, and the boys at the Jesuit Seminary of Feldkirch.

When the education of the young princesses was completed, the eternal question arose of marrying them as quickly as possible. One married the late Don Carlos, Duke of Madrid, and the Princess Alice became my father's wife.

The marriage took place on January 11, 1868, and on December 2 of the same year, a son, the first child of a family of ten, was born.

My mother was a pretty, *petite*, fair girl at the time of her marriage, full of energy, and quite ready to enjoy life thoroughly after her dull up-bringing at the convent. She danced exquisitely, was a fine shot, a good horsewoman, and before the babies followed fast on each other's heels, she lived solely for amusement. Her jewels are wonderful; she has some of the finest diamonds in Europe, and possesses what to my mind is worth more than all—a famous necklace once the

property of Marie-Antoinette, on the design of which Boehmer lavished all his skill.

After my father's second marriage, the Emperor of Austria, his third cousin, gave him part of the Imperial Castle of Salzburg for a residence, and there I spent my childhood and girlhood.

CHAPTER II

Salzburg : The Palace : Early days : My father : His genius for organisation : The education of a princess : An impromptu bath : Lessons : A dull life : The power of the priests : Palace tyranny

In 1870 my grandfather died, and my father the Archduke Ferdinand became Grand Duke of Tuscany. He had previously promised the Emperor Francis-Joseph that he would never attempt to go near Florence on account of the political situation, and the title of Grand Duke was only to be his during life; after his death it was stipulated that his children should be known as Princes and Princesses of Tuscany, as well as Archdukes and Archduchesses with the style of Imperial and Royal Highnesses.

The Emperor, as I have before stated, placed part of the Imperial Castle of Salzburg at my father's disposal, and there we spent our childhood. Salzburg is a picturesque town, about seventy-three miles from Munich, surrounded by mountains, and its only claim to fame seems to be that it was the birthplace of Mozart. The palace,

which is so extensive that it is possible to reach three different churches without leaving its precincts, was built by the Archbishops of Salzburg about 1600, and these prelates were *grands viveurs* in every sense of the word. When they tired of the restraint and gloom of the castle, they quietly disappeared down a subterranean passage which led to a charming villa called Hellbrunn, and there they were able to pass the time more pleasantly than at the episcopal palace.

When I was a child the palace was the saddest and gloomiest place imaginable. It was certainly very imposing, but it was also extremely uncomfortable as a residence, and there was nothing artistic about it, inside or out. It was not properly kept up; it looked fast falling into decay, and in some rooms the once expensive wall coverings hung in damp discoloured strips which were never replaced. Grim stories of secret murders clung round this depressing place, and I remember how frightened we were as children when we were told that the pictures in the Grand Gallery came to life at night, and that the dead and gone princes and princesses got out of their frames and wandered from room to room.

My father, who was quite Florentine in his ways, kept up an Italian entourage as much as possible and preferred Italian servants to any others. He

had a wonderful personality, and I feel it is only right for me to pay tribute here to the memory of this best of fathers and most charming of men. I loved him devotedly ; he was our playmate and entered into our nursery life before we commenced the dreary treadmill existence which was called education for our future positions. My happiest recollections of my dear father are of the times when I sat by his side with my brothers, listening to marvellous fairy tales for which he painted illustrations, and cooking all kinds of sweet 'messes" over the nursery fire. He was often away from Salzburg as he used to shoot with the Emperor Francis-Joseph and the Crown Prince Rudolph, who was his especial friend and confidant. When he was at home he was an indefatigable worker ; he managed all his Tuscan properties (the Grand Dukes were great land-owners and some of their Italian estates are still in the family), but since his death they are under the jurisdiction of the Emperor who now sees to nearly everything in connection with them. Papa was up and about every morning at four ; he worked all day, and only allowed himself the relaxation of a walk or drive. He had a strong constitution and an iron will, though his temperament was emotional and excitable, and was adored by his seventy-five servants, for he was a just master who entered into all their personal

MY FATHER, FERDINAND IV., GRAND DUKE
OF TUSCANY

interests, and did not know the meaning of false pride.

Religion, as practised in Roman Catholic Courts, was regarded by my father with good-humoured contempt. "Religion," he used to say, "est seulement religion d'étiquette." He lived in a world of his own ideals, but was, with all his imaginative tendency, a very practical man, orderly and punctilious to a fault, and quite as businesslike as any banker or lawyer. He liked to know how every detail in his household arrangements was carried out, from the decoration of the State apartments down to the management of the kitchens; he was at home everywhere—and he made his presence felt. He and I were absolutely in sympathy with each other; we were not demonstrative, but a perfect understanding prevailed, and all I know that is useful I learnt from him.

Our nursery days were over when we reached the age of seven, and when the knell of that happy time sounded we commenced our education. Since I have left Palaces and Courts I have been greatly amused at the interest taken by the public in the doings of royalty, and especially of royal children. The English newspapers teem with the sayings and doings of little princes and princesses, and display breathless interest in their pony-riding, boat-sailing, and

other amusements, which are, after all, only the usual occupations of well-bred healthy children; but I take it that these accounts are inserted to please that worthy British middle-class whose gods are respectability and royalty.

I wonder if the public has the faintest idea of what the "éducation de prince" really means. As the Christian's life is supposed to be a constant preparation for eternity, so the life of young princes and princesses is a constant preparation for their future position. The day when we bade good-bye to our nurses, we also bade good-bye to childish things, and were handed over to tutors and governesses to be moulded into the most approved patterns of deportment. We were supposed never to question anything, but merely to become clever automata. How tired I used to get of hearing, "Don't get into a carriage in that way"; or, "Imperial Highness ——, if ever you wish to become a queen, it will never do to enter a room as you do—practise repose." It was always the same; we were not educated for ourselves, but merely to live in the eyes of the world; our young lives were sacrificed to position, and we were not supposed to possess any individuality or display any emotion.

Those who possess a grain of understanding will realise how awful such a life is to the unfortunate possessors of temperaments, and I

think some of the Habsburgs, myself included, have suffered martyrdom through the tortures of this restricted and artificial upbringing. On the other hand, there are placid unimaginative royalties, who take everything that comes with complete indifference. I have cousins who are quite content to possess distasteful husbands who were chosen for them. They seem quite happy on the royal treadmill, and no doubt their lives are in many ways preferable to the storm and stress which comes to those who try to open palace-gates and find the road to freedom. "What will the people say? What will the people think?" That was the parrot-cry that we heard from morning to night, till at last we learnt to look on the people as a sort of fetish, to be placated at any cost, and if ever one said "Bother the people," one was told of the fate which overtook unconventional royalties who dared to trifle with the populace, and my own beautiful ancestress, Marie-Antoinette, was always held up as an example to me. My governess persisted in saying that if Marie-Antoinette had never played at being a farmer's wife she would never have been guillotined. On the other hand, the docility of Marie-Louise was always quoted as the proper spirit for a princess. If she had defied the Emperor of Austria and joined Napoleon in his lonely exile,

she would have had a very uncomfortable time, and would have found Longwood far less pleasant than Parma; but as she obeyed her family, she was made Duchess of Parma, had plenty of money, unlimited toilettes, and her subsequent marriage ventures with semi-plebeian husbands met with no active disapproval.

I felt somehow that I should never become a Marie-Louise. My inner self was always struggling for mastery over outward forms and ceremonies, and my father was the only person in whom I was able to confide; but even he, with all his large ideas, was a little *borné* by tradition. I remember when I asked him if I might learn the violin, he replied, "No, it is not decent for a princess to play the violin." Fortunately for myself, however, I was partially enlightened when still a child about the boredom of society at other Courts, for at the age of fourteen, part of my training consisted in having to attend the State dinners, where I was purposely placed next uninteresting people, in order to teach me the art of making conversation, a valuable accomplishment for any royal personage to acquire.

My first defiance of authority happened when I was delivered into the hands of my governess. I was sisterless for eight years, and had therefore been the close associate and playmate of my four

brothers, who always aided and abetted me in mischief.

One day I had been unusually troublesome, and as a punishment I was told I should not be allowed to have my swimming lesson, which was indeed a deprivation, as I thoroughly enjoyed swimming. That afternoon I went out for a walk with my governess and my brothers to a small lake near Salzburg, which was a favourite summer rendezvous of the "smart" Salzburgers. There were a number of small pleasure-boats on the lake, and we had our own boat waiting for us. My governess sat in it, looking the picture of pompous responsibility, and outwardly we were the best-behaved royal children in the world. Our progress greatly interested the crowd, and probably this was what led to my brother Leopold whispering to me, "Let's *do* something." An inspiration seized me. Turning to my governess I said, "May I bathe, please?"

"What, Imperial Highness? No — quite impossible."

"May I jump in now please?" I asked again, to the subdued accompaniment of joyous giggles from my brothers.

"No."

I wasted no more time, but dived out of the boat, fully dressed as I was, and swam about, to the consternation of the spectators on shore, and

to the furious dismay of my worthy governess, who screamed: "Come out, you bad girl!" one moment, and scolded my delighted brothers the next.

However, I was able to get back without accident, and arrived at the palace wet but still defiant. As I went up the great marble staircase I met the Emperor's brother, the Archduke Ludwig-Victor, who stared at me in great astonishment, and finally burst out laughing.

"Well, Louisa," he said, "what on earth have you been doing?"

"I've been taking my bath," I replied.

"It looks like it," he answered, surveying me, while pools from my dripping clothes were rapidly forming on the stairs; "and it seems to me," he continued, "that you always will do as you like," and giving me a good-natured pat on my wet shoulders he went his way.

When I reached my bedroom I had an excessively unpleasant interview with mamma. She, too, looked at me in astonishment, and when she found words she said: "Only one thing is possible, Louisa, and that is to send for the doctors at once, for you must certainly be mad."

Left alone with my governess I remarked, "You see what your 'punishment' has done. It was quite useless, and you need never try and stop my swimming lessons again."

My education was indeed a strenuous one. I worked nine hours a day, and was obliged to go in for the regular university course. Every year I had to attend the examinations at Salzburg, and I well remember a particular history examination when I was about fourteen. I was asked some questions about Maria-Theresa, and to everybody's astonishment I said loudly: "I think Maria-Theresa was quite right to choose a husband for love, and not be forced into marrying any one —that's a stupid thing to do." But I stopped abruptly, awed by the genuine dismay of the horrified professors, and my own history master turned pale at the thought of the interview with my parents, which was bound to follow as soon as they heard of my tirade.

No outsider can imagine how uneventful my life was as a child and young girl. Salzburg itself is a dull town, but the palace was duller than a week of English Sundays. No light literature was allowed; we saw no newspapers except Catholic ones; we were never allowed to visit picture exhibitions, and only at rare intervals were we taken to concerts or to the theatre. It was an absolutely conventual existence, and its similarity to such a life was enhanced by the perpetual presence of the priestly element within our gates, while our collection of rosaries and prayer-books would have done credit to an ecclesiastical museum.

The whole atmosphere was redolent of religion, and the Jesuits were the "Power behind the Throne" at Salzburg, as indeed they are at most Catholic Courts—indeed it would be impossible to give any idea in these pages of the influence and authority of the priests. They concern themselves in all the family affairs, and their influence is to be feared and deplored, as it is not always exerted for good. Their calling makes one apt to forget that, after all, they are only men, and so their advice is not infrequently sought on most intimate things, often with lamentable results.

I have no wish to attack the priests, although I have suffered greatly at their hands. There are many priests of the character that makes saints and martyrs, but there are others who take advantage of their calling to do and say things utterly abhorrent to good taste and decency, and many a young princess has to answer at confession questions which should not be asked. Should she ever hint that she will complain of these personal questions, she is met with the threat that her confessor would in that event inform her parents that he had sorrowfully observed evidences of a perverted nature, which would make the convent the proper place for her.

Palace life is a network of petty tyranny, for everybody preys on and tries to rule over some one else. The *entourage* seem to think that their

mission in life is to issue orders and to ape their masters, so that even as a child I was made aware that envy, hatred, and malice are greatly in evidence in a palace, and, in short, that the Christian virtues are rare there.

CHAPTER III

All about my relations : My uncles : Duke Charles of Parma. His collection of watches : A rare specimen : The teeth that did not fit : A ducal wardrobe : "All-a-blowing" : Visits and visitors : Vienna : The Empress Elizabeth : How her hair was dressed : A long walk : The Empress presents me with the Stern Kreuz Order : Our last meeting

THOUGH my paternal grandmother possessed no pronounced characteristics, my father and his brothers were most interesting and uncommon personalities.

My uncle, the Archduke Ludwig-Salvator, is a highly original person and a gifted and learned man. He has spent his entire life in research of every description, and is an authority on geography, natural history, and botany. He owns a beautiful villa on the island of Majorca, called "Miramar" after the Emperor of Austria's castle; there he leads what he considers the ideal "simple life," the main element of which consists in doing exactly what he likes. He lives like a peasant, wears sandals and loose linen trousers; his skin is burnt a deep copper colour, and he works

indefatigably in his vineyards and gardens. He has a boundless love of Nature, is perfectly pagan in his theories, and I think I am right in saying that he is a Sun Worshipper.

My uncle Ludwig is on excellent terms with the country folk, but strangers are anathema to him. He was a great friend and kindred spirit of the late Empress Elizabeth, who occasionally came as a welcome guest to his mountain retreat. The Archduke loves his yacht, which is always kept in readiness lest at any moment he should decide to put to sea. He was once wrecked off the African coast, where he and the crew narrowly escaped capture by some of the hostile tribes. He wrote a book about this adventure, entitled "Shipwreck: or a Midsummer's Night's Dream," and in it he described his yacht as being "the only place that I can call HOME."

I think I am imbued with some of his love of solitude, for I am never so happy as when I am alone with Nature, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot."

My father's second brother, the Archduke Charles-Salvator, also disliked the restrictions of Court life. His chief amusement consisted in riding about in omnibuses and trams, and these democratic tastes caused the municipal authorities many anxious moments. He was a wonderful craftsman, and his "locksmith" work was a marvel of

delicate ingenuity. His son, the Archduke Francis-Salvator, who is very clever, married the Emperor of Austria's daughter, the Archduchess Valérie, and my uncle died only nine days before his first little granddaughter was born.

The Archduke John, my father's youngest brother, better known to the world as "John Orth," has had such a romantic career that I shall later deal with it at length. My father's sisters were not so interesting as their brothers.

My maternal great-grandfather, Duke Charles of Parma and Lucca, was one of the most amusing and original of men. He had estates in Saxony, to which he retired when he became weary of Court life. He was always a Protestant at Meissen, where his favourite castle was situated, and when he was remonstrated with on the subject by his spiritual advisers he replied, "When I go to Constantinople I shall be a Mahomedan ; in fact, wherever I go I always adopt, for the time being, the religion of the country, as it keeps me so much more in tone with the local colour-scheme." He was very erratic, and it is said that one day he accepted an invitation to lunch and promised to arrive in twenty minutes at his host's house, but suddenly changed his mind, ordered his carriage, and went off to Parma, then a three days' journey, without a word of explanation. His servants were never sure of his comings and goings. Every-

thing in the castle was kept in readiness for him, and the sound of his travelling-carriage was the only intimation ever received that he had returned from one of his long absences.

He was a great admirer of the fair sex, and there is a window in the castle at Meissen which is almost completely covered with the autographs of the ladies who came there. Between him and his wife terms of courtesy and coldness existed. The Duchess bored him to tears. She was *dévote* and excessively plain, and whenever he returned from a visit to Parma, he was wont to exclaim, "Il faut absolument que j'aille me retremper auprès d'une jolie femme après ce tombeau de mon illustre compagne."

I made my great-grandfather's acquaintance at Nice when I was twelve years old, and I can clearly recall our meeting. I went to see him with my mother, and the first thing that struck me when I entered the room was the ticking of innumerable watches, for the Duke delighted in antique watches, of which he had a collection of about six hundred. They were all kept wound up, and they were beautiful and rare specimens of the watchmaker's art. Some of the watches lived in perpetual seclusion in chamois-leather cases, as the subjects painted or enamelled on them were, although beautiful, slightly *risqué* examples of the *genre* Louis XV. I believe the old Duke was often

asked why he gave these very "fast" timepieces a place in his collection, and he invariably answered, "Well, I adore Nature; and as Nature was created to be admired, why shouldn't I admire it on my watches?"

When I was presented to my great-grandfather, I saw him as an elegant old man, who was nearly blind. He passed his hand over my face, and said, "Ah, you resemble Marie-Antoinette, but you have a happier expression." Then, with a sudden burst of energy, he added, "Regarde moi bien, Louise, je suis une bête rare. Je suis ton arrière grand-père qui est maintenant vieux et dégoutant."

I looked at him, and said decidedly, "You must have been very handsome, great-grandfather."

"Yes, yes," he replied, "and I enjoyed life, and doubtless you will enjoy it, too, little one."

"I hope," said mamma, coldly, speaking for the first time, "that Louise will not follow in your footsteps, grandfather."

The old man laughed at this tribute to his younger days. When I said good-bye to him he gave me a lovely jewelled box for a souvenir, and before changing the subject I must tell another story about him. As I have said, he dearly loved a pretty face, and one day he was asked to a dinner-party to meet some really beautiful

women. The Duke was then quite an old man, and he was, I regret to say, toothless, for he would never wear artificial teeth. However, the possibility of renewing his conquests so appealed to him that he went to a dentist and was supplied with a set of false teeth for the eventful banquet. All went well at first; the Duke smiled at the fair ones, and rejoiced that he could smile so freely; but suddenly, without any warning, something went wrong with the plate, and he was unable to shut his mouth. He remained in this unenviable position for a few minutes, and the guests began to fear he had been seized with a fit, but when he found he could not close his jaws he wrenched out the teeth in an access of fury, and flung them to the other side of the room where they remained until after dinner when the servants swept them up.

My uncle Duke Robert of Parma kept all his murdered father's wardrobe at the Castle of Wartegg, and I never saw such a wonderful collection of clothes. Duke Charles had been a great dandy, and his passion for fine apparel was somewhat like that of Queen Elizabeth of England. There were endless uniforms, smart suits for all occasions, and English creations specially designed for the rather flamboyant taste of young bloods of that period. Once a year all the clothes were taken out of cupboards

and wardrobes, and hung up on lines in the great courtyard and in the castle gardens to be aired. I happened to be at Wartegg during one of the yearly airings, and the sight was unforgetable. A high wind was blowing, and as the trousers and coats became inflated, they presented the appearance of a regiment of swinging headless bodies endowed with a grotesque semblance of life.

The first time I ever travelled was in 1876, when we all went to Paris. I remember what an exciting journey it was, and I think we must have been very troublesome, for we insisted upon crawling up into the luggage-racks whence we were dislodged with difficulty. We arrived at Paris in the evening, and I know that a great family gathering met us at the station, but beyond that my impressions of Paris are very vague.

As I grew older I often used to accompany my father on his shooting expeditions, and thanks to his tuition I became a fairly good shot, and could bring down a chamois without much difficulty. I loved those times; the invigorating mountain air, the free life, the companionship of my beloved father, all gave me a taste of liberty, and I was sorry when the time came to return to the priest-ridden palace of Salzburg. We had no fixed summer residence, sometimes we went to

Bohemia, sometimes to Lindau, and occasionally to my grandmother's residence near Gmunden—the Villa Orth—which my Uncle John had built for her, modelled on the style of a Pompeiian villa. It was a beautiful place, with a glass-covered courtyard, and replete with artistic treasures.

The Emperor of Austria's father, the Archduke Franz-Karl, lived in another part of the palace at Salzburg, and I remember as a child of six dining with the kind old man, and seeing the Empress Maria-Anna, wife of the Emperor Ferdinand, who abdicated in favour of his nephew Francis-Joseph in 1848. The Empress was rather odd looking, for she would not discard the crinoline or flounced skirts of the early 'fifties, and as her millinery was also of that period she looked somewhat archaic. Ferdinand was an epileptic, and had a distressing fit on his marriage night. My mother once met him at dinner when she visited the castle of Hradschin from Carlsbad. He was then quite mad, but as he was harmless he was allowed to meet and see members of his family. Mamma knew that, although every dish was offered to him, for form's sake, he had strict orders to refuse those which his medical advisers considered unwholesome. When mamma helped herself to some nuts, the Emperor looked greedily at her plate but refused nuts himself.

Suddenly he said, "All right, if I'm *not* allowed to have any—I'll take them," and then and there he grabbed all mamma's nuts, much to her dismay.

Royal visitors occasionally came to Salzburg. I remember the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria and his bride, Princess Stéphanie of Belgium, coming to see the Archduke Franz-Karl. Leopold, King of the Belgians, and Princess Clémentine accompanied them; Clémentine was a little girl at the time, and I remember admiring her pretty embroidered dress tied with a rose-pink sash, and her long brown hair which flowed over her shoulders. This was quite a gala visit for Salzburg, and there was much excitement, and an imposing display of fireworks.

I also saw Queen Amélie of Portugal when she passed through Salzburg with her mother the Comtesse de Paris. I gave her all my youthful admiration, for she was so sweet and charming, and I thought she looked very pretty in her tailor-made costume.

The Shah of Persia also visited Salzburg, and I was much impressed when I saw him riding through the streets on a white horse with its mane dyed red, while an attendant held a large umbrella over him. The Persians were most uncleanly in their habits. They slaughtered

THE IMPERIAL CASTLE OF SALZBURG: MY BIRTHPLACE

animals and roasted them whole on the inlaid marble floors, so that every one was devoutly glad when the visit came to an end.

I went to Vienna when I was eleven, for the somewhat prosaic purpose of having "my teeth seen to." I shall never forget my first impression of the Austrian capital. It was perfectly overwhelming, for at Salzburg we lived years behind the times, and I saw trams and electric light at Vienna for the first time. The great event which took place during my stay there was the unveiling of a monument to my heroine Maria-Theresa, and on this occasion nearly all the Habsburgs met. I was very much impressed, and wrote a long letter about it to my brother Leopold. We often went to the Hofburg, where I once had a glimpse of the Empress Elizabeth as she glided through a corridor, looking like some beautiful ghost. She always attracted me strangely, and it may have been that some kind of subtle sympathy between her past troubles and my future ones drew us together.

The Empress was really a lovely woman, and her hair was exquisite. When it was unbound it simply enveloped her, and one maid was specially selected to dress it. The coiffure was carried out in rather a strange way. The carpet in the dressing-room was covered with white

linen sheeting, and the Empress sat on a low chair in the middle of the room. The maid was dressed in white, and a most curious proceeding took place when the process was over of brushing and combing the luxuriant tresses and braiding them into the elaborate plaits affected by the Empress. The maid collected and counted every hair that remained in the brush and comb, and active search was also made on her dress and on the carpet for any other hairs which had fallen out. The number was then told the Empress, who was exceedingly displeased if she thought too many hairs had come out during the "dressing," and the maid had a *mauvais quart d'heure* in consequence.

The Empress had many eccentricities, mostly well known to the public, but I remember hearing that, on one occasion, when she was stopping at Lainz, she indulged in a very fatiguing escapade. She was in the habit of taking her "Greek Reader" with her on her walks in the lovely woods and park which surround the castle, and she rarely went beyond them. One evening she ventured outside, but as she had a silent fit on, the Reader had perforce to be silent also, and for eight hours of the night the Empress walked round Vienna, wrapped in her own sad and gloomy thoughts, and was only recalled to herself and her surroundings

when day broke and she found that she was outside her own domain with a very patient and footsore Reader in attendance.

I saw the Empress Elizabeth in May 1889, after the tragedy of Meyerling, when I went to receive from her the Stern Kreuz Order. This Order is always given to Austrian Archduchesses when they attain their majority, and marks their formal presentation at the Court of Vienna. I went to the Hofburg with my mother, and the Empress received us in special audience. She was dressed in the deepest black. Her face, which looked out like some pale snow-flower from the folds of her heavy *crêpe* veil, showed traces of incessant weeping, and she had a nervous habit of constantly wiping the corners of her mouth with her handkerchief.

She was very kind to me when I thanked her for presenting me with the Order, and I felt the sharp contrast between myself in all my youth and this sad mother who seemed to have completely finished with the splendour and gaiety of the life to which my Stern Kreuz Order was the passport.

I never again saw her alive. When I stood by her coffin in the Imperial vault of the Capucins, I felt that she was happy at last, and I like to imagine her spirit roaming untrammelled in the Elysian fields, exchanging thoughts

with Heine, and reunited to her much-loved Rudolph.

Few people really understood the Empress, and her excessive shyness was often attributed to pride or artificiality. Many troubles had chilled her emotions, and she became a prey to the spirit of unrest; but as a beautiful woman and a devoted mother Elizabeth of Austria has had few equals.

CHAPTER IV

Marriage projects : Much of a muchness : Dom Pedro : My first visit to Saxony : The Castle of Moritzburg : The Coburg alliance : "Aunt Coffee-Mill" : A screaming interview

MOTHERS who possess daughters are alike all the world over when it becomes a question of finding husbands for them, although the matrimonial projects of "royalties" present difficulties which do not occur in the marriages of subjects.

Luckily for most princesses the question of their looks is not generally of vital importance. Religion and essential health for future maternity are the chief factors in a proposed match. Inclination, affinity, and love are, of course, desirable adjuncts, but they are, I am afraid, very often absent from royal marriages.

I do not wish to imply that a princess is forced to accept the first suitor who presents himself. She can choose her future husband within certain limits, but as most princes and kings are very much alike, choice is not a difficult matter after all. Part of our education is to accept without

question whatever lies upon the knees of the gods, and although every princess doubtless at some time dreams of an ideal Prince Charming, she rarely meets him, and she usually marries some one quite different from the hero of her girlhood's dreams.

I used to ask my married cousins if they had ever been in love, and whether their husbands were affectionate and devoted in a solitude *à deux*, but I always received the same reply:

"Oh, Louisa, how can you ask such questions? One does not discuss these subjects." So my curiosity remained unsatisfied. I supposed, as a matter of course, that I should be married some day, and I devoutly hoped that mamma and papa would find me a husband with whom I should be in sympathy.

Mamma's matrimonial campaign on my behalf began when I was sixteen. The Empress of Brazil, who was my great aunt, had a nephew, Dom Pedro, and she thought he would make me a most suitable husband. She confided her plans to mamma, who lost no time in taking me to Baden-Baden, where the Empress and Dom Pedro were staying. I had no idea why we were going to see my great aunt, but I somehow felt I was out for inspection; indeed, my brothers teased me, and said I should soon find out that I had been sold to an unknown husband, and this

greatly enraged me. However, I found Dom Pedro quite a nice boy, though we did not fulfil the matrimonial hopes of our relations. He merely looked on me as an amusing girl, and we spent most of our time romping about in the gardens. Poor Dom Pedro! Three years after our meeting he went mad, and he is now under restraint in a castle somewhere in Austria.

In the summer of 1887 my parents, my two brothers, and myself, went to stay at the Castle of Pillnitz; and on this visit to Saxony I saw my future husband, Prince Frederick-August, for the first time.

My brothers, as usual, teased me about getting married. "You will see, Louisa," they said, "that you will be cooped up in Saxony as Queen one day." I secretly determined that I should not be forced into doing anything or marrying any one I did not like, but at the same time I resolved to be watchful and find out all I could of what was going on around me.

Queen Carola was very sweet to me, and gave a ball in my honour. I was wildly excited, as this was the first real ball to which I had ever been. Naturally my toilette was the great question, and I eventually chose a gown of pink *mousseline de soie*, with a tiny *décolletage*, and very short sleeves. I took two hours to dress, and I remember how girlish and happy I was,

and what a thrill of innocent vanity I felt when I saw my reflection in the long mirror. My brown hair was plaited and entwined with pale pink roses, and some of mamma's beautiful jewels, lent to me for this great occasion, were displayed on my dainty gown.

Prince Frederick-August was only twenty-one, and looked handsome and gallant in his uniform of blue and gold. We danced together several times, and I remember saying to him when he laid aside his busby on a chair, "What a fine bouquet-holder for my cotillion flowers; I'll put them in it." I did so, and gradually the busby became quite full of flowers! I thought Frederick August most charming, and indeed I was favourably impressed by everybody and everything on this visit to Saxony.

I was greatly struck with the magnificent castles belonging to the King of Saxony—that of Moritzburg especially. It is situated in the midst of a lake, and is surrounded by woods on all sides. The castle, which formerly belonged to August the Strong, Elector of Saxony, is a massive building with four round towers, and the interior is a treasure-house of pictures, tapestries, and antique furniture. Many of the State rooms have walls hung with exqusite Cordova leather, and the great dining-hall is decorated with sporting trophies. Here is kept the famous

drinking-cup made from a stag's antlers, out of which, according to time-honoured tradition, every guest at Moritzburg must drink.

The horn is filled with champagne, but it is very difficult to drink all the wine as custom demands. It runs into the antlers in a very "tricky" way, and those people who only manage to drink part of it are only credited with achieving the "Little Cascade." More fortunate individuals, who tilt the horn at the proper angle, drink the whole without accident, and achieve the honour of doing the "Great Cascade." A very interesting book is kept, going back for a hundred years, in which are recorded the names of those who have drunk out of the horn cup, and whether they were "Great or Little Cascaders."

Moritzburg is a fine sporting estate. The woods abound with wild boars and stags, and there are also immense game preserves. There is a charming villa in the Park which was given by the Elector August to Count Marcolini, his favourite Minister; it contains most beautiful eighteenth-century furniture, and one room is full of stuffed birds of every description.

We were shown the villa by a very original caretaker, who waxed enthusiastic on the subject of the stuffed birds, and kept on repeating, "Look at that pheasant—there

he's quite a baby, there he's getting older, and isn't he splendid in that case when he is grown up."

Before leaving Saxony we went to the military manœuvres, but I did not see Prince Frederick-August, who for some reason had a bad attack of shyness, and kept out of the way. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit, although nothing matrimonial came of it, and four years passed before the question of my marriage was again seriously discussed.

In the winter of 1891 I went on a visit to Vienna with papa, and it was understood that I should again meet Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Our first meeting had taken place at one of the family dinners when I found myself, a child of fourteen, sitting between Ferdinand and his brother Philip of Coburg. The two princes paid no attention to me, but quite ignored my presence, and talked across me to each other. Their conversation was carried on in Hungarian, which I understood perfectly, and it consisted of more or less "after-dinner stories," and vivid accounts of their various love-affairs quite unsuited for childish ears. I sat perfectly silent until dinner was nearly over, and then, turning to Ferdinand, I said in fluent Hungarian: "Don't you think it is rather unwise to talk about your affairs

in a foreign language without first making sure that your neighbour does not understand it?" Ferdinand was somewhat taken aback, and I continued. "Don't be disturbed, I could not possibly repeat your secrets." At this remark both brothers burst out laughing, and Philip cried: "Bravo! she's a wonderful little girl, let's make a friend of her." "There's nothing so useful," I retorted, "as to make a friend of a person you are afraid of."

Ferdinand eyed me critically, and said to Philip in a voice charged with meaning: "I didn't know they grew such nice little plants at Salzburg." He always called me "Ma petite cousine polyglotte," after this, and took a great interest in my doings; and whenever he and his mother, Princess Clémentine, came to Salzburg, he always contrived to have a few words with me.

My father was very much in favour of a marriage between myself and Prince Ferdinand, but my mother greatly objected to a Coburg alliance, as she detested the family root and branch. Had I not been attracted to Prince Frederick-August, of whom somehow or other I was always thinking, I might perhaps have not been averse from becoming Princess of Bulgaria, for Ferdinand was handsome, rich, and not unamusing.

I was very much interested in my parents plots and counterplots, and I reflected that, as usual, the looker-on saw most of the game. One day papa, who was most anxious for me to see Princess Clémentine of Coburg, asked me to come for a drive with him, and said, somewhat shyly: "Suppose, Louisa, that we go and see Aunt Clémentine."

"With pleasure, papa," I answered, trying to hide a smile at his transparent ruse, for I knew how joyous he was at scoring off mamma.

We arrived at the Palais Coburg, a gorgeous mansion, and waited for Aunt Clémentine in a beautiful salon, full of flowers and costly bric-à-brac. Papa was very nervous, but I was perfectly cool, and presently my aunt arrived. The Princess was short and fat, but withal not inelegant, and very much *grande dame.* She had piercing blue eyes, a prominent nose, and the brains and judgment of an exceptionally clever man. Unfortunately, Aunt Clémentine was extremely deaf and used a large ear-trumpet which we irreverently called "The Coffee-Mill"; indeed, in our family she was known as "Aunt Coffee-Mill," and as she possessed an exceptionally *mauvaise langue,* my brothers declared that she ground the reputations of others to powder in her "Coffee-Mill."

When Princess Clémentine came into the salon she looked at me with kindly scrutiny, and said to papa: "Elle est bien jolie, et je serais contente de l'avoir comme fille." She then took papa's arm and went into the next room, where they commenced what I can only describe as a shrieking duet. Papa shouted his hopes and plans about me into the ear-trumpet, and Aunt Clémentine shrieked aloud her matrimonial designs for Ferdinand, and in this amusing way I heard their best-laid schemes.

Papa did not speak much French, and Princess Clémentine did not speak much Italian, so whenever their respective meanings became slightly obscured, they shouted at each other louder than ever. At last the noise got on my nerves, and I was on the point of giving a shriek on my own account to relieve my overwrought feelings, but luckily controlled the impulse and contented myself with rearranging a bowl of lilies on the table near me.

On the way home I looked quizzically at papa, who was slightly hoarse after his unaccustomed vocal efforts. He returned my glance and smiled. I pressed his hand, and said, laughing: "Your secret is mine, and I'll not say a word to mamma, but why on earth didn't you bring a megaphone if you wanted to speak to Aunt Coffee-Mill?"

In the early summer of 1891 I went again to Vienna with mamma, who wished to make a pilgrimage to Maria of Zell. I have an idea that she imagined the Virgin of Zell might look favourably on her marriage projects. Anyhow, while we were lunching at a tiny inn on the road to Zell a telegram was handed to mamma, who told me that Prince George of Saxony and his son Prince Frederick-August were coming to Lindau on June 19, and that we must try to get out of going to see Princess Clotilde and her brother Prince Ferdinand.

It was then June 11, and, sad to relate, mamma did not accomplish her pilgrimage. Like most religious things it went to the winds when worldly matters arose, and our thoughts veered round to marriage and the two prospective husbands I was so soon to meet.

Mamma decided that we had better return to Vienna and pay a flying visit to Princess Clotilde, and so, a day or two afterwards, we went to Buda Pesth and thence to Alcuth, where the Princess has a magnificent castle.

A carriage and four met us at the station; the coachman wore the picturesque Hungarian costume and flourished an enormous whip. Then commenced a wild drive which lasted for two hours; we tore over sands and fields where no road had ever been; nobody can

imagine what it was like, but I managed, notwithstanding all the bumping and shaking, to admire the rough country, the old-world villages where the storks nested on the houses, and the pretty costumes worn by the peasants. It was very hot, and we were glad when at last the castle and civilisation came in sight. I wore a pink cambric dress and a pretty pink straw hat profusely trimmed with Parma violets, and I remember anxiously wondering what impression I should make on Princess Clotilde who, with her husband and daughters, received us with great cordiality.

Soon afterwards Ferdinand appeared. I always think that in him the theatrical world has lost a fine comic opera king, for he looks as though he ought to be on the stage, singing about himself and wooing a stage princess in the approved manner. On this occasion, when he wooed *me*, Ferdinand was most elaborately attired in a light grey suit with an *ultra chic* Panama hat. He constantly waved his well-manicured hands, and displayed the costly rings which glittered on his fingers. He attitudinised like a Narcissus, and kept on posing until he thought doubtless I was sufficiently impressed by his fine figure, his rings, and last, but not least, his smart yellow boots; he then suggested a walk in the castle gardens and, of

course, I readily accompanied him. Mamma went with us out of respect for the proprieties, but it was very warm and we soon left her behind, looking angry and alarmed at seeing me alone with the man she detested.

Ferdinand cut some flowers, and as he arranged a posy of red and white roses he said, pointing to them: "Do you know that these roses and their leaves represent the Bulgarian national colours? Are they not a pretty combination?"

"Quite charming," I answered demurely.

"Would you like to see Bulgaria, Cousin Louisa?"

"Oh yes, if it's not too uncivilised."

"Is that *all* you can find to say?" he cried in an excited tone. "Then *I* will speak. I have known you long enough to appreciate your good qualities, I admire you—I feel lonely."

"Well—get married," I said lightly.

"I have thought of it, but I have met with no success," replied Ferdinand; "and that is a good thing, for now I know that you alone are the woman I can love."

"Well," said I with mock earnestness, "let me assure you at once that I do not and could not love you, and should not be happy as your wife."

"Oh, Louisa," he pleaded. "I would do everything for you."

"It would be of no use," I answered.

"But I love you so dearly," he persisted.

I lost patience with him. "Cousin," I said, "do realise once and for all that I can never love you."

"C'est la première fois qu'une femme me dit cela," he exclaimed. "Be wise, Louisa; think of all that it lies in my power to give you."

"I quite realise your worldly advantages, but you would never be able to give me real happiness. Listen Ferdinand," I continued seriously. "I'm sure you only want to marry me because I am an Austrian Archduchess; the word Archduchess stands for love in your vocabulary, and you have promised your Ministers to return to Bulgaria betrothed to one. Well—*I* shall not marry you. You'd better go to the Duke of Parma and ask him for my cousin, Marie-Louise." And I turned and left him looking the picture of despair.

Even now I can see Ferdinand, faced with explanations to his Ministers, standing in that sunny garden among the roses wringing his large white hands and exclaiming:

"Oh, Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

Later in the afternoon he begged mamma to try and induce me to change my mind, but she told him, with a great deal of truth, that "when once Louisa has made up her

mind, neither God nor the Devil will make her change it."

The same evening, at dinner, I sat next the Bulgarian Lord High Chamberlain, the Count de Bourboulon, who was quite an interesting man; and as Ferdinand had brought several smart young Bulgarian officers in his suite, the time passed pleasantly, and I chattered away to my heart's content.

Ferdinand was in a vile temper, and, when courtesy obliged him to drink my health, he banged his glass savagely on the table as if his one idea was to break it; he sulked, and hardly spoke at all, and gobbled bread incessantly. From time to time he sent vindictive glances in my direction as I sat making myself particularly agreeable to his Minister with the somewhat malicious motive, I am afraid, of endeavouring to make the Count realise what a charming Princess of Bulgaria I should have made.

After dinner we made our adieux, and drove back to Alcuth in the wild manner of the morning. We got into the waiting train before Ferdinand arrived at the station, and he sent Count de Bourboulon to ask us to give him the pleasure of our company in his *coupé*. Mamma declined, and her refusal made him sulkier than ever, and I fear he must have made things very unpleasant for every one in his suite.

He took my advice, however, and the same year he married my cousin, Princess Marie-Louise of Parma, who died after six years of married life. His second wife is Princess Eléonore of Reuss, who has been the kindest and best of stepmothers to my cousin's motherless children.

CHAPTER V

Domestic scenes : Arrival of Prince Frederick-August of Saxony : I accept him as my future husband : Our betrothal : "A Chevalier sans reproche" : Marriage formalities : My trousseau and jewels : I bid good-bye to Salzburg : The Hofburg : The Act of Renunciation : My wedding-day : "Golden Roses" : My little train-bearer : An old superstition : How it came true : We leave for Prague : The Emperor's train de luxe

On our return to Vienna we went to my grandmother's residence, the Villa Orth, where my father awaited us, and there was a somewhat unpleasant scene between my parents over the Bulgarian fiasco, which had greatly pleased mamma. Papa, on the contrary, was very much annoyed at my refusal to accept Prince Ferdinand, and I think he dreaded the interview he would be obliged to have with Princess Clémentine, who went nearly mad with rage when she was told that I had declined the honour of a Coburg alliance.

I was rather alarmed at all the bad temper displayed simply because I would not marry Ferdinand, but my grandmother consoled me,

saying: "My dear, never be forced into doing anything repugnant to you; your other suitor will doubtless please you better, and I hear that he is quite a 'good boy.'"

I was very nervous and apprehensive in the overcharged home atmosphere, and I wondered with a terrified wonder whether I should be obliged ultimately to accept my parents' choice of a husband without consulting my own inclinations. For the first time in my life I felt the dreadful "trapped" sensation that I afterwards experienced so much, and I cried bitterly when I contrasted my position with that of other girls, who were, as I imagined, not precipitated into matrimony, but were allowed a more liberal choice of a husband than a poor princess.

From Gmunden we went to Lindau, and on June 19 my future husband arrived, accompanied by his father and sister. Prince Frederick-August only stayed at Lindau two days, but before leaving he proposed formally for my hand. When papa told me this, and asked me what answer he should give to the Prince, I hesitated, and begged for time to think it over. I considered the matter in all lights; I knew that my parents wished me to marry, and my independent spirit demanded a larger area in which to think and act than my life

at Salzburg afforded. I wished to be in evidence somewhere, and my ambitions were pleased with the prospect of becoming a queen, for although I fully recognised the hollowness of royal state, I was romantic enough to imagine that a princess who desired to enrol her name in history would have no difficulty in making herself a "Power for Good." My girlish dream was to win the affection of my future subjects; and this is, perhaps, the only dream of mine that has ever become a reality, for even to-day, exiled and lonely, I know that thousands of loving hearts beat for me, and that I shall not lose my sovereignty over the affections of my beloved Saxon people who have remained loyal to me and have never failed to offer me consolation in my darkest hours.

I told papa that I was quite willing to marry Prince Frederick August, who returned to Lindau directly the news was communicated to him. Mamma insisted on my donning a very becoming gown to celebrate my formal betrothal, so I awaited the Prince's arrival in a pale blue silk dress. I felt nervous and excited as I realised that I had now crossed the Rubicon, and I kept on repeating to myself, "I *wonder*, I *wonder* if I shall be happy?"

When Prince Frederick-August was shown

into the salon where we were assembled, I forgot my own heart-searchings in pity for his nervousness. He was too distrait to give my parents the kiss which etiquette demanded, but advanced towards me, blushing furiously, and bestowed a very, very shy kiss on my forehead.

After that first ordeal was over we recovered our composure, and closer acquaintance with my *fiancé* revealed his many excellent qualities of heart and mind, a discovery which was a source of great joy to me, for I now felt sure that my marriage would be a happy one.

Frederick-August was very good-looking, tall and well set up, with an open expression, and the kindest blue eyes in the world. I do not think that a better-hearted man exists; he seemed then, as he is now, loath to believe in wickedness and intrigue; he looked upon women as sacred beings, and he was chivalrous to a fault. His good qualities have been his worst enemies, because his innate nobility has always prevented him from realising what designing minds are capable of contriving. What a misfortune that no kindly Fate interposed at our betrothal, to warn us that this seemingly ideal union would result, ten years later, in my being banished from my home through the machinations of enemies, and that I should

be forced, in order to try and save myself from utter ruin, to inflict lifelong suffering on the best of husbands!

But nothing occurred to give us a glimpse into futurity. I had been much pleased with my first impressions of Saxony, and as my father's first wife was a Saxon princess, I naturally felt that there was a tie between the two Houses which would probably make me less of a stranger to my husband's family than would otherwise have been the case. So I looked at my future through the rosiest of glasses; after all, I reflected, I had really nothing to trouble about. My betrothed husband was young, handsome, and devoted to me, and, even if he was a trifle shy and awkward as a lover, these traits were commendable, for they conclusively proved that Frederick-August had kept "fancy free," and that I should not be confronted with any spectres of the past, or hear highly coloured accounts of *affaires de cœur* with actresses and others.

Although my parents had given their consent to my projected marriage, formal permission had to be obtained from one mightier than they—namely the head of the Habsburgs, the Emperor Francis-Joseph. My father, therefore, telegraphed to him saying: "Je demande à votre Majesté, la permission de donner ma fille Louisa,

MY HUSBAND, KING FREDERICK-AUGUST OF SAXONY

en mariage au Prince Fréderic-Auguste de Saxe." The Emperor (who knew all about it long before papa's announcement) replied immediately that he was very pleased to hear the news, and sent us both his affectionate felicitations.

The important preliminaries were now settled, and my wedding-day was fixed for November 21, the same month and almost the same date that thirty-five years previously had seen papa's marriage with Princess Anna of Saxony.

The great question of my trousseau was now the topic of the hour, and while my father was arranging the marriage formalities with the high Court officials at Vienna, mamma and I were deep in the mysteries of chiffons. I must confess that selecting my gowns gave me exceptional pleasure for, unlike most girls who choose their own frocks, and nowadays often those of their mothers as well, I had never hitherto been allowed to say what I should like to wear, but had been obliged meekly to accept what was given me. The orders for the trousseau were placed in Vienna, and I am sure that it will interest all women to know that many exquisite jewels were included among my countless wedding gifts.

The Emperor of Austria gives each Archduchess who marries with his consent a present

of 100,000 florins; and in addition to this he gave me a lovely pearl, sapphire, and diamond bandeau for the hair. My bridegroom gave me a splendid set of jewels which had belonged to his mother, the Infanta Maria-Anna of Portugal, comprising a *rivière* of diamonds and some bracelets containing miniatures surrounded by diamonds of his great-grandparents, the King and Queen of Portugal, and a magnificent diamond and emerald ring. King Albert of Saxony gave me a diamond *rivière*, and I was also presented with a marvellous tiara of emeralds and diamonds which was an heirloom in the Saxon Royal Family. Mamma, too, opened both her heart and her famous jewel-cases, and bestowed many lovely gifts upon me, so I had nothing to complain of on that score; in fact, I felt like a princess in the "Thousand and One Nights."

The weeks between June and November passed quickly, and at last the time came for me to say farewell to Salzburg. The day we left for Vienna was saddened by leavetakings, and I was deeply touched to see how much every one seemed to regret parting with me.

When we arrived at Vienna we went straight to the Hofburg where we were to stay for the wedding, and on November 20 I was obliged

to read my "Renunciation." This curious ceremony has to be complied with by every Austrian archduchess before her marriage, and is a renunciation of her rights of succession under the Salic law to the throne of Austria. It also includes the renunciation of legacies left by the members of the Imperial House, a wise plan, designed to keep the family money together.

The act of Renunciation is performed with all the pomp and circumstance characteristic of the Austrian Court. At eleven, on the morning of November 20, my father escorted me to the throne room at the Hofburg where the ceremony was to take place. I wore a lovely pink satin gown with a raised design on it of lilies of the valley and white violets, and a page carried my train which was five yards long.

The throne room was crowded. In all quite four hundred persons were present, including my bridegroom, all the male members of the Habsburg family, the Ministers and high officials, the generals, and the representatives of the great Austrian nobility. It was a striking *ensemble*, with the elaborate uniforms worn by the men and the lovely jewels and toilettes of the ladies, and I felt a thrill of pride that I was a Habsburg.

The Emperor stood before the throne under

a canopy; I walked to the last step of the throne, and from there read the Act of Renunciation. A State luncheon was given after the ceremony was over, and the remainder of the day passed in a whirl of excitement.

On November 21 I woke early and, woman-like, I at once wondered whether it was a fine day for my wedding. Alas! it was a morning of fog and driving rain, and I felt a little superstitious dread which, however, speedily vanished in the all-absorbing occupation of being attired.

My wedding-dress was a lovely and unique gown which had formerly been part of the trousseau of Princess Anna of Saxony. When my half-sister Marie-Antoinette died, she left us her jewels, laces, and to each of us one of her mother's unmade Court dresses, and the one which fell to me was so beautiful that it had always been destined for my wedding-dress.

The material was white moiré antique with golden roses and their leaves embroidered on it in high relief; the corsage was perfectly plain with the *décolletage de cour* worn by all royal brides, and the long and heavy train was embroidered with garlands of roses. The tone of time had given a lovely tint to the material, and the effect of the shimmering roses was perfectly lovely when I moved. My hair was

waved, and crowned with a wreath of myrtle; behind it was placed a diadem of diamond wheat-ears, mamma's present to me, and from under the diadem flowed my lace-edged tulle veil.

No civil ceremony ever takes place when an Archduchess is wedded. The documents relating to the marriage, the dowry, and the Deed of Renunciation are sent to the country of her adoption, but the religious service is the only one recognised.

As soon as my toilette was completed, the procession was formed, and I went in great state to the Imperial Chapel of the Hofburg. The rooms through which I passed were crowded with people and lined with soldiers. A little page dressed in red and gold carried my train, and I wonder whether Count Harrach remembers how tired he became. When we reached the grand staircase I happened to look round, and saw that he had a very flushed face and was on the point of bursting into tears, as train-bearing was too arduous a task for such a small boy.

I felt so sorry for him that I stopped and, gently disengaging the train, put it over my arm instead—a rather undignified action, but I really could not bear to see the child's discomfort.

At last we entered the chapel. It is a small Gothic edifice, very dark at all times, and on my

wedding-day it was darker than usual. There were assembled all the members of the Tuscan and the Saxon families, and the Emperor sat on a throne on the left side. The Empress was not present. The Bishop said Mass, and just before I uttered the fateful "I will," I turned to the Emperor and made a deep curtsey, implying "Of course, with *your* permission." I did the same to papa, and then said, "*I will*" so loudly that every one was quite startled, Frederick-August included.

Directly the service was over the bridal cortège reformed, but as we came last this time we stood still and chatted to those around us. Frederick-August wore the uniform of the Austrian (King of Saxony's Own) Dragoons, which became him admirably, and when he looked at me so affectionately with his kind blue eyes, I felt that I was a very happy girl indeed.

There was a great deal of delay before we managed to leave the chapel, and the long court trains worn by the ladies impeded everybody's progress. Three of the Archdukes who were standing close to me became so impatient that, in order to find another way out of the chapel, they jumped over my train. My brother-in-law the Archduke Otto noticed this, and said to me in rather perturbed tones, "Do you know the

Habsburg superstition, that any one who jumps over a bride's train dies in the same year?"

"Well, it's November now, so they will have to be quick about it," I said, trying to pass it off lightly, for I saw that Otto was really upset at the occurrence, for many uncanny things happen to us Habsburgs.

The old superstition unfortunately proved true. A fortnight after my marriage the Archdukes Sigismond and Ernest died, and at the end of December they were joined by the third one, the Archduke Carl-Ludwig.

After the wedding the Emperor gave a luncheon. I sat next to him, and he was in excellent spirits, perhaps at getting another Archduchess off his hands, and as the family followed the example of the illustrious head, all stiffness and constraint rapidly disappeared, and we were a very merry party. I remember the Archduke Carl-Ludwig slyly telling me that he quite envied Frederick-August.

After the luncheon I went up to my rooms and changed my bridal gown for a grey costume, a black jacket, and a grey feathered hat. The weather was still wet and dismal, and, as we drove to the railway station, I felt a curious presentiment of coming disaster which I could not shake off. My common sense put it down to overwrought nerves and the depressing weather

but my imaginative inner consciousness made me regard it as a warning. I felt utterly miserable when I said good-bye to papa. I clung to him crying, and he mingled his tears with mine. Something seemed to tell us both that my girlish days were indeed over, and that with them I had also said farewell to much of life's happiness.

The Emperor had placed his private train at our disposal to travel to Prague, where he had lent us the Castle of Hradschin for our honeymoon. The Imperial train was a veritable palace on wheels ; there were bedrooms, bathrooms, rooms for the suite and for the servants, a special *coupé* for the chef and his satellites, while the kitchen arrangements were quite elaborate. I was dreadfully tired, and my head ached painfully as a result of crying, and directly the train was in motion I installed myself in an easy chair. Frederick-August tucked a rug carefully round me, and without any more ado I promptly went to sleep. When I awoke I wondered for the moment where I was, but I soon realised that instead of being Louisa of Tuscany I was Princess Louisa of Saxony on her wedding journey.

Frederick-August came and sat by me. We had both been so much surrounded with etiquette that it seemed a little difficult to grasp the fact that we were alone with no one to interfere with

us, and that we were now married. He was still nervous and shy, but equally devoted and charming, and I felt myself becoming more and more attracted to him.

After a cheerful little supper in the train, we reached Prague at eleven o'clock — my wedding-day was over.

CHAPTER VI

Hradschin and its surroundings : The Ghetto at Prague : A discourse on the Chosen People : We go to Dresden : Popular excitement : Our State entry : Roses everywhere : The Taschenberg Palace : Rococo furniture and bad taste predominant : The dog that bit every one : Excitement and fatigue : We begin to settle down : I resolve to make the best of my life

THE Castle of Hradschin is beautifully situated on the summit of a hill overlooking Prague and the Elbe, and we passed two days there quite pleasantly, notwithstanding the weather, which was very unfavourable for sightseeing. We visited the Ghetto at Prague, and also the Jewish cemetery, which remain just as they were in mediæval days. I was greatly impressed by the cemetery, and the thought passed through my mind how strange it was that, although we derive a great deal of our religion from Jewish beliefs, the Jews are, as a rule, so detested and despised, although in England some of them have become the intimate friends of Royalty, intermarry with Christians, and adopt old-English surnames.

I have always had an instinctive dislike of the

Jew, whether I know him as an Italian, a German, an Englishman, or a Scotchman. I do not think that any Hebrew has ever become Irish. Their pronounced Oriental mannerisms operate against them in social life, for just as "once a Russian always a Russian," so once a Jew always a Jew, particularly in eating and drinking. But with all their objectionable qualities, Jews often possess the genius that makes celebrated musicians, actors, authors, and lawyers. The Oriental blood, which accounts for their occasional social lapses, compensates for these in bestowing upon them a glowing imagination and artistic instincts, and it is a pity that art is not the ruling passion of the race instead of money.

On November 24 we left Prague for Dresden. It was a memorable journey for me, and one which I shall never forget. From the Bohemian frontier to Dresden is three hours by rail, but all the way from the frontier until we reached Dresden the people were massed on both sides of the line, trying to get a glimpse of me and my husband, and I could see innumerable handkerchiefs waving and hear frantic "Hochs" as the train passed.

We stopped at every tiny station *en route*, and I received quantities of bouquets, which were usually presented to me by little girls dressed

in white, who recited poems welcoming me to Saxony.

I felt absolutely overwhelmed with kindness, and I had never seen anything like this display of spontaneous affection. I caressed the dear children from sheer gladness of heart, and was only too delighted when the people pressed round and tried to touch me. It was really a triumphal journey, and I thought how foolish I had been to take any notice of my presentiment of coming trouble. "Surely," I reasoned, "no unhappiness can possibly be mine in a country whose people have taken me to their hearts. If they as strangers already love me, my husband's family will love me too, and I shall be the happiest woman in the world." I began to plan all I would do for good, and I made up my mind that I would always be a friend and comforter to those who asked for my help and sympathy, even if the suppliants were the meanest beggars in the streets. I would never be an "inaccessible" royal personage, hearing through and speaking through other people, and never would I be influenced from doing what I knew by instinct was right.

Comforted and reassured by these pleasant reveries, I arrived at Dresden in a glow of happiness. There we were given a tremendous reception. Every one seemed delirious with

joy; the people were madly excited, and I was myself carried away with astonishment and delight at the enthusiastic welcome accorded to a girl of twenty-one by the generally unemotional populace.

The State carriage awaited us outside the station. It was a magnificent historical vehicle painted in vernis Martin, and drawn by eight horses, not unlike the State-carriage used by the English monarchs at their coronations. We drove off, escorted by a guard of honour, and surprise followed surprise as we passed through the town. Although it was November there were roses everywhere, and the place looked like one huge garden. The roofs were black with people, who showered roses on us as we passed, and the lamp-posts were covered with people clinging to them, while others were seated on the iron brackets which supported the lamps. The shop windows displayed no goods, but only people, who were seated or standing inside; the occupants of the windows threw flowers, and from all sides arose a volume of cheers and shouts of joy.

The only thing that annoyed me on this happy day was the hateful toilette which had been "created" for my State entry into Dresden; for although I had been allowed a certain latitude of choice, mamma had absolutely overruled me when

it came to the question of my gowns for great occasions. So I now wore what she and the *couturière* had considered the correct thing for my homecoming—an odious pale blue cloth dress trimmed with dark blue velvet, together with a fawn-coloured braided cape profusely trimmed with jet. It sounds to-day as horrid and inartistic as it was then, and I secretly thought that I looked like a bead-decked barbarian. "Horrible," I said, as I felt the jet chains on my shoulders, and I noted the similarity of this tight, heavy gown to the weight and restrictions of the etiquette I so detested. "If this were *really* etiquette instead of only a costume, how encumbered I should be," I cynically reflected.

On our arrival at the Town Hall we were received by the Mayor and Municipality of Dresden, and there were many speeches. From the Town Hall we went to the royal castle, which presented an interesting and imposing sight. We were conducted with much ceremony to the State apartments, where the Ministers, and the Corps Diplomatique were assembled, and afterwards presented to me, and although I was very tired, I succeeded, I hope, in saying something courteous and appropriate to every one. Royalties are obliged to be Spartans in the matter of endurance, but use becomes at last second nature to us, and we generally

manage to refrain from displaying in public any signs of bodily or mental fatigue.

When the reception was at an end, we went over to our new home in the Taschenberg Palace, part of which had been given to us for our own use. The chamberlain of our household, Herr von Reitzenstein, and his wife who was my lady of the bedchamber accompanied us, as did also my lady-in-waiting, Fräulein Elisa von Ende, a very pretty, charming, and clever girl.

Painters and decorators are, like dressmakers, most unreliable people, so when I arrived inside the Taschenberg Palace, it was only to find that my apartments were not finished. As I entered my boudoir two workmen walked out of it, and not recognising who I was, one of them said quite crossly: "Take care where you're going, the paint isn't dry on the doors yet!"

Closer inspection proved that it was not, and the whole suite reeked of paint, varnish, and new furniture. The rooms were stacked with my books and pictures, which had been sent from Salzburg, and every room I entered looked most uncomfortable.

I nearly wept with vexation when I saw how inartistically my drawing-room had been arranged. I, who love the antique, was con-

fronted with sham rococo Louis XV. furniture in the worst possible taste, enamelled white with pink flowers, and the general effect was that of an iced cake decorated with pink sugar! My boudoir was another monstrosity in sham oak, with maroon damask upholstery. All the windows were covered with heavy net blinds, and the damask curtains were adorned with top draperies and endless ropes and tassels of crimson silk cord. It was altogether detestable, and I inwardly raged at the bad taste of the person who had chosen such appalling things.

My bedroom and dressing-room were not such eyesores, and I was greeted with frantic barks of joy from my little dachshund, who was chained to a heavy chair in the middle of my bedroom. I asked the reason of this, and it appeared that he had commenced his career at Dresden by biting every one who came within his reach. The dog was overjoyed at seeing me, and with a tremendous effort he upset the chair, and dragged it to where I was; poor fellow, he felt as I did, slightly overcome in the atmosphere of the Taschenberg Palace. Even then there was no rest for me, as I had to dress at once for the state banquet in the evening, and I felt more dead than alive when it was over.

The next fortnight was one of constant fatigue;

deputations arrived daily from all parts of Saxony, and there were State dinners every night; I was worn out with fatigue, and never had a moment to myself.

People stood for hours outside the palace waiting to see us come out, and they even ran after our carriage just to try and speak to us. I became quite bewildered, and I was also unaccustomed to the dialect which is peculiar to Saxony.

At last we began to settle down after all the excitement, and I was able to put my house in order. I commenced by trying to discover which would be the best way for me to lead my life; I felt instinctively that my position was a difficult one, for certain little occurrences had already made me fully aware that I should not lead the ideally happy existence which I had fondly imagined would be mine.

CHAPTER VII

A royal family : My father-in-law : His fanaticism : Princess Mathilde : Her love of ants : Her piety : Dress and appearance : Her curiosity : Prince John George : Lives of the Popes : Prince Max of Saxony : Cleanliness and godliness : Mutual antagonism : "C'est malheureux que tu sois venue dans notre famille"

At the time of my marriage, King Albert and his wife Queen Carola were the reigning Sovereigns in Saxony, and my father-in-law, who was a widower, was his only brother. The King was very clever, very good and most kind to me, and I am happy to think that his affection never changed. He used to call me "Kleine" (little one), and he said "What I like about Louisa is her absolute frankness." I did not see a great deal of him, but we were on terms of the warmest friendship.

Queen Carola was an excellent and charitable woman, who occupied herself in good deeds. She accompanied her husband during the Franco-Prussian War, and nursed the wounded with rare patience and skill. She was remarkably hand-

some but somewhat shy and reserved. She was childless, and this was put down by the people to the Jesuits who were supposed in some way or other to have prevented her from becoming a mother. Another curious idea was prevalent that Providence would not grant a son to the reigning Sovereign, as ever since the days of August the Strong, no direct heir has been born to a King of Saxony, and my eldest son who will eventually become King was born when his father was not yet Crown Prince.

My father-in-law, Prince George of Saxony, was a strange man who possessed a truly remarkable personality. In appearance he was tall, and he stooped slightly ; his head was large and square, and the most striking features of his face were his cold, small eyes, which looked out suspiciously from under his bushy eyebrows. When I first knew him he was rapidly becoming bald, and he always brushed his scanty grey hair most carefully over the uncovered place to try and hide it, but with no success. He was imposing in uniform, but in mufti he looked very badly dressed, and he wore ugly low shoes which showed too much of his white knitted stockings. Besides fulfilling the duties of a father-in-law, Prince George also took upon himself those of a very strict mother-in-law. His one idea in life was religious duty, and he carried this out so well that from the day I arrived

in Dresden, I was literally surfeited with piety. He was an intolerable bigot, narrow-minded to a degree, and he could be a fanatic on occasion. I think he must have suffered from some kind of religious mania, for he would remain for hours prostrate before the altar, praying fervently to all his special saints. The moment, however, that he was outside the chapel, he dropped his sanctity, and he never practised tolerance or forgiveness, which to my mind are the first principles of true religion.

Prince George ruled his children through fear, and it was not long before we came into conflict over a question of religion. Queen Carola had asked me to act as her deputy, and open a bazaar in Dresden which was held to raise funds for supplying a Protestant church with a much-needed new altar. I of course assented, and performed what was to me a very pleasing task. The same evening we had a family dinner-party, and I could see that my father-in-law was furious about something. It was not long before I was enlightened, for he suddenly turned to me and told me that I was all that was reprehensible and an apostate to my religion because I had opened a Protestant bazaar. He raged and stormed like one possessed, but I calmly told him that, although, in this case, I had acted on behalf of the Queen, I should never hesitate to say yes, if I were again asked to

perform a similar duty on my own account. My remarks added fuel to the fire, and my father-in-law worked himself up into such a furious passion that he seized me by the arm and shook me before every one, servants included. That was more than I could endure; I left the table on the plea of indisposition, and it took all my husband's powers of persuasion to prevent me from going off to Salzburg the same night.

Like most tyrants, Prince George was himself the victim of tyranny, being entirely in the hands of the priests, who made him dance to whatever tune they pleased. He employed them to spy upon me, and even sent a priest from Dresden to say Mass when we were in the country, in order to report my doings to him, and in particular to find out what kind of literature I read. Once, I remember, at confession I was asked a very intimate question, and when I protested against what I considered prurient curiosity, I was informed that this particular question had been put to me at my father-in-law's instigation.

Poor bigoted, intolerant man! He lived out of his time, which ought to have been in the palmy days of the Inquisition, and I think that his greatest pleasure in life would have consisted in having a daily *auto-da-fé* until he had burned all the Protestants in Saxony.

My sister-in-law, Princess Mathilde, is a "great" amateur artist, and she also poses as a patron of the belles lettres. She goes in for figure-subjects and covers huge canvases. If Mathilde were ever to paint tiny *genre* pictures, there would be weeping and lamentation among the firms who supply her with materials, for her work demands a great deal of paint, and she is a most profitable customer.

Princess Mathilde is built on very generous lines, and perhaps that is the reason why she does everything on a large scale. I have heard that as a girl of sixteen she was pretty enough to be mentioned as a possible wife for the Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria but, when he visited Dresden in order to inspect her, he realised that her *beauté de jeunesse* would presently outrival the most exuberant Rubens type, and at once decided to look out for a more elegant bride. My sister-in-law is a very extraordinary woman. We were never in sympathy, and she made no pretence of even tolerating me; she does not possess a particle of femininity, but likes to be thought an *esprit fort* far above every one else in intellectual attainments. She does not care for dress, although she fondly imagines her toilettes are "le dernier cri du chic," and I remember that for years her favourite theatre-gown was a fram-

MY SISTER-IN-LAW, PRINCESS MATHILDE OF SAXONY

boise coloured silk brocaded with tiny green flowers; her hair was dressed in a style entirely her own, always at variance with her tiara, and her complexion exactly matched the framboise gown. She timed herself for dressing: twelve and three-quarter minutes were allowed for a court ball, five and three-quarter minutes for dinner, and her maids were not allowed to spend one moment more over her toilette.

When I lived in Dresden Mathilde chose her gowns in a most odd way. Patterns were submitted to her, which she held up to the light in turn, and the most transparent were invariably selected. Her hats usually covered both her head and her ears, and her riding-habit became a Joseph's coat of many colours through exposure to the elements. Mathilde loved riding, but her mounts had to be chosen with care in order that the horse might not collapse under her weight. She is a most pious princess, and always takes part in the various church festivals. I well remember her at the Corpus Domini processions when she walked up the aisle wearing the *décolleté* gown, demanded by etiquette, with a page holding her train; her gown was very short in front to make walking easy, and her huge hands, encased in large gloves, clasped an enormous wax candle which dropped grease everywhere.

One of her hobbies is bee-keeping, and she once received some very distinguished visitors wearing a short skirt, a muffler over her head, and thick woollen gloves. She had been deep in the cult of bees when our friends arrived, and at once treated them to a lengthy discourse on bees and ants. Mathilde said that life held no greater pleasure for her than when she was examining an ant through a magnifying-glass, and every one tittered at the picture thus conjured up of the huge princess and the tiny ant.

Mathilde danced a great deal when I first came to Dresden, but as she was not sure-footed, she often slipped on the parquet floor, and even occasionally fell down with a thud that could be felt all over the room. She also skated, but she slipped and slided so ungracefully that the king put a stop to her performances in public, and had part of the private gardens flooded for her especial use in winter; there she went in for Alpine sports, and the sight of Mathilde on "skis" was unforgettable.

She professes to regard men with complete indifference, and used to remark, "It is nothing to me whether a man is old or young, ugly or handsome."

Two years ago she visited Varallo near Novara where I was staying We did not

meet as I was away in Florence for a few days, but I was told that the first glimpse people had of her was a large woman sitting on a very small donkey accompanied by a lady- and gentleman-in-waiting. Everybody at first thought she was an American, and directly she arrived at the hotel she instructed her gentleman-in-waiting to go to the manager, and endeavour to find out all about me, for she had previously been told that I was staying there. The manager explained to her emissary that I was away, and this seemed to make him furious. He went upstairs and examined some of my trunks which were placed in the corridor, and even tried to bribe the chambermaid to let him inside my rooms. I cannot give any reason for this disgraceful behaviour except that Mathilde ordered him to do so; if she did so it was quite worthy of her.

The next morning the slumbering guests were aroused at an unearthly hour by the shouts of Mathilde demanding her bath water. A whole regiment of hot- and cold-water jugs was brought, also the largest hip-bath of which the hotel boasted; but after Mathilde the deluge, and it took nearly half a day to dry the floor.

At 7 A.M. Mathilde left to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Varallo, and when

she returned to the hotel she had a heated discussion about some change which had not been given to her.

"I won't go from here without my forty centimes," she cried angrily; but she gradually calmed down and went on her way, leaving three francs to be divided among the servants.

Prince John-George, my husband's second brother, is a very studious person. He reads from morning till night, and his literature chiefly consists of the lives of dead-and-gone Popes. He always asks whether one is acquainted with the life of such and such a Pope, and he is quite disappointed when any one displays ignorance of the subject.

He is built on the same lines as Mathilde, and is somewhat heavy on his feet, as his partners find out to their cost whenever they are honoured by a command to dance with him. John-George, as becomes a papal student, is deeply religious, and he is also imbued with a tremendous idea of his own importance. He is selfish and unsympathetic, but I found him easier to get on with than Mathilde.

His first wife was Isabella of Wurtemberg, and his second Maria Immaculée, a daughter of my second cousin the Comte de Caserta. Her sister married my brother, the Archduke Peter, and they are both sweet, delightful women, peacemakers in every sense of the word.

Prince Max of Saxony, my other brother-in-law, possesses much of his father's fanaticism, but he is, notwithstanding, a really good and pious man, who devotes all his time and money to religion.

I remember he was once taken ill at Freiburg, and was obliged to return to Dresden from sheer starvation because he had given all his worldly substance to the poor. Mathilde was deputed to meet him, and as his father imagined that he might be somewhat unpresentable, he was asked to leave the train a few stations away from Dresden. Max was in a terrible plight when he appeared in the family circle. His hair and nails had grown beyond any possible conception; his soutane shone with grease and hard wear; his toes protruded through his shoes. In fact, he looked most unlike a prince or a priest. I was quite horrified, and I asked him whether he had brought any luggage.

"No," he replied; "I've only a toothbrush, and after I brush my teeth with it I use it for my hair!"

Such was the royal family into which I had married. We were mutually antagonistic from the beginning. I was like the cuckoo in the sparrow's nest, or the one artistic or original member of a worthy middle-class family in the midst of his relations. I forgot that "Originality

and imagination are the unforgivable sins," and looking at it from this point of view I can see that I must have proved a most disturbing element, for I had not fulfilled their expectations of being a princess who was merely content to be a princess and not a woman. Every proof of my independent spirit was regarded with mistrust and anger, and I think they one and all, Frederick-August excepted, agreed with my father-in-law when he said in those early days :

"C'est malheureux que tu sois venue dans notre famille, parceque tu ne seras jamais une des nôtres."

CHAPTER VIII

My first visit to Berlin : The Emperor William : What I think of him : The green chiffon dress : Customs and ceremonies : The ghostly carriage at the Royal Castle : The treasure-house : Some stories about August the Strong : His ugly daughter-in-law : A defiant electress : Carried away in earnest : The fate of a practical joker : The frightened blacksmith : The strong man indeed

I FOUND Dresden rather unpleasant during my first winter, for I rarely saw the sun, and I was not sorry when in the month of January we went to Berlin on a visit to the Emperor William. It is etiquette to be presented to the Emperor wearing a silk dress, so I travelled to Berlin in another of mamma's "State gowns," with a hateful toque to correspond. Before I left Dresden I was pestered with exhortations as to my behaviour when I met the Emperor, and I was especially asked on no account to alight too quickly from the train. If the Emperor approved of me he would kiss me, but I must not attempt to return the kiss.

I thought all this fuss ridiculous. I did

not feel that veneration for Emperors which seemed to possess my husband's family, for in mine we had always had an Emperor as our relation. I was, however, curious to see the Emperor William, because I knew he was a man of strong likes and dislikes, and strength of character always appeals to me.

When we arrived at Berlin I saw that the platform was a mass of colour with all the uniforms, and I wondered which wearer would prove to be the Emperor, for it looked an "Embarras de choix." Two footmen rushed up to our carriage carrying some carpet-covered steps, and at last as I looked about I recognised the Kaiser. Etiquette went to the winds. I disregarded the steps and jumped down to the platform, and directly the Emperor saw me, he embraced me and kissed me on both cheeks and afterwards kissed my hand. I was so pleased that I forgot all I had been told *not* to do, and promptly returned the kiss. The Generals were presented to me, and we then drove to the palace where I made the acquaintance of the Empress and her children, and the Kaiser said he would escort me to my rooms. We walked so quickly that Frederick-August was almost left behind, and when we reached the suite apportioned to me the Emperor remarked as he showed me the communicating

bathroom: "I know you will appreciate a good bathroom."

"Oh yes," I assented. "A bath means a great deal to me," and then I added impulsively: "You have made a great impression on me, and I think both you—and the bathroom—are perfectly charming."

The Emperor smiled kindly, and seemed rather amused at my naïve remark. I sat next him that evening at the State banquet, and had a very good time although the music deafened and tired me. I talked freely to my host, and found that he did not object to my frankness.

"Now Louisa," he said quietly, "you and I will be good friends, and later on I want you to become my political friend as well."

I found the Emperor William a most remarkable man. He can be very genial, but he possesses an iron and inflexible will. He is vain, and always wishes to be the first actor in whichever drama he plays, and although he is an undoubted authority on military matters, he understands little or nothing about art or music, and his wonderful gifts are marred by his intense egoism. He can be equally charming or the reverse, and the reverse is not at all pleasant. His personal appearance is unique; he is well groomed, his expression is sympathetic and intelligent, and his marvellous eyes are truly the windows of

the soul of this restless, brilliant, and strange man.

Before leaving next day I took tea with the Empress, and again saw all the children. The Kaiserin gave me the predominant idea of being an excellent mother; she was very good-looking but rather too tightly laced to be graceful, and I thought her a trifle dull. She talked solely on two topics: one was the comfort she found in religion, and the other concerned the care of babies, and she told me that she insisted upon nursing all her children herself.

The first State ball given after my marriage was a brilliant affair, and my dress created quite a sensation. Mamma's forethought had provided me with a gorgeous gown, literally plastered with jewelled embroidery, not at all suitable for a girl of my age. I regarded it with ever-increasing dislike; and although I tried to take off some of the trimming, the scissors made little impression on the bullion fringe, and I said to myself as I ruefully regarded my sore fingers: "This gown was certainly made for a princess, it's as hard and glittering as a palace"; then, "I won't wear it, I'll look natural." I sent for my maid and told her my decision, but we were faced with the question of what to substitute for the rejected dress. I considered what material would best lend itself to my dream of sweet simplicity, and

decided that chiffon was the only one for this occasion. My maid told me that she knew a little dressmaker who would run up the gown quickly. I accordingly sent for her, and we evolved a most artistic garment of sea-green chiffon, which was simplicity itself. The décolletage was round, and the sleeves practically invisible! I wore pink carnations in my hair, a few diamonds glittered like dewdrops in the soft chiffon bodice, a twist of silk encircled my waist, and the delicate fabric flowed round me in soft billowy folds. I was so young and girlish looking that the dress suited me as nothing else could have done, and I felt the incarnation of youth and happiness.

Before the ball I came into the salon where my father-in-law was sitting, and he was exceedingly displeased with me. He reproached me very bitterly on my gown, which he said was quite unsuitable for a princess, but I comforted myself with the thought that as he had not a particle of taste himself, anything artistic or unusual was quite wasted on him, and therefore his opinion did not count for much.

My gown really did make a sensation, and the day after the ball, all the green chiffon in Dresden was sold out; my dress was copied fifty times over, and my maid was bribed on all sides to disclose the name of the dressmaker.

There are many curious ceremonies at the Court of Saxony which I do not think exist elsewhere. On January 1, the "Hofspiel" takes place, after the presentations and receptions are over, when the Royal Family sit at small tables and play whist. The entire Court then comes through the room from door to door, and everybody curtsies deeply as they pass the card-tables. Naturally the curtsies are acknowledged, and we used to look like a lot of nodding mandarins as we sat playing cards and inclining our heads at the same time.

When a royal wedding takes place, an old tradition ordains a State dinner, at which only members of the family are present. The Royal Family sit in a row at a crescent-shaped table, and are waited on by the great officials and pages. The Court watches the meal from behind, and when the King drinks the health of the happy couple, four trumpeters dressed in mediæval costume blow a fanfare on silver trumpets.

I was present at this dinner when John-George was first married, and I remember a ludicrous contretemps occurred. One of the chefs was bringing in an enormous piece of beef, when he tripped and fell head first into one of the large silver-gilt flower tubs; the pieces

of beef (which was already sliced to prevent loss of time in carving) were scattered in all directions, and the denuded bone rolled away over the carpet. This occurrence so disturbed the composure of the page who was standing behind me that he upset the gravy tureen he was holding all over my shoulders, and as I was greasy from neck to waist, I think I have undoubtedly cause to remember John-George's wedding banquet.

The Court pages are always in evidence, and when we attended the concerts, they always stood behind our chairs, and those unfortunate boys who were not very strong sometimes used to faint from over-fatigue.

Another custom is known as the "Vogel-schiessen" and its origin goes back to mediæval days. Every year a fair is held near Dresden and the Royal Family invariably attend it. The fair is like most others, a collection of freak shows and booths of all kinds with the pervading odours of humanity, sausages, cheese, and beer. The great event of the day is shooting at the "Vogel-schiessen," which is a large wooden bird made up of a number of pieces, which fall out if they are hit in the right place, and the display of marksmanship is watched with breathless interest. The Royal Family all shoot, and an attendant informs

the waiting crowd which Prince or Princess is about to try their skill. Thanks to my father's tuition I am quite a fair shot, and I usually managed to hit the "Vogel-schiessen" in a "vital" part.

At Christmas, long, heavy currant loaves, very rich and indigestible, are baked, and families visit one another to eat the loaves, which are to be found in every home. I remember on one occasion when John-George and Mathilde paid me a Christmas visit, they devoured about fourteen slices of currant loaf apiece, and then had quite a dispute as to who had eaten the most!

Like many royal residences, the Royal Castle is supposed to be the scene of occasional supernatural happenings, and I can certainly vouch for the truth of something very uncanny which came within my personal experience.

After the fire (February 24, 1894) which nearly destroyed the whole interior of our apartments in the palace, we removed to another suite of rooms which had been uninnabited for thirty years. One evening during dinner, when we were all laughing and talking, our attention was arrested by the tramping of horses' hoofs, and the rumbling of a heavy carriage in the courtyard, seemingly as if it were just turning out of the great entrance.

THE ROYAL PALACE, DRESDEN

We naturally wondered who was leaving the palace, and I sent a footman to inquire, but he returned and told me that no carriage had driven out at the time we heard the noise. I was very much puzzled, and shortly afterwards when the same thing occurred I investigated it myself, but to no purpose. I mentioned the matter to my father-in-law, who told me that his old aunts, who formerly resided in this part of the palace, had occasionally heard the mysterious horses and carriage, and it was supposed to presage trouble and disaster to the Royal Family.

A special lunch is given by the King to the Royal Family on Easter Day, when the consecrated egg is eaten with much formality. The King takes a hard-boiled egg, and cuts it into as many pieces as there are members of the family present, and they then eat their respective slices. After the "egg" course, chicken broth and cold meats follow, and the menu is always the same year after year.

In the Royal Castle there is a famous treasure-house, called the Grünegevölbe, where, in vaulted rooms below the level of the street, are kept the wonderful art treasures and jewels belonging to the Kings of Saxony. There are beautiful examples of Benvenuto Cellini work, rare ivories inlaid with precious stones,

and exquisite Limoges enamels. The parures of August the Strong, Saxony's famous Elector, together with his buckles, buttons, and sword-hilts, make up a glittering mass of diamonds, emeralds, rubies and sapphires, and the crown jewels baffle all description.

The Grünegevölbe did not monopolise all the treasures, for one rainy day we explored the lumber rooms at the top of the palace and found quantities of beautiful furniture, rolls of Cordova leather, and rare tapestries, all so thickly covered with the dust of ages that it was at first quite impossible to estimate their beauty or value. After our discovery, I am glad to say, these treasures were all re-instated, and distributed with great artistic effect in the State apartments.

I always wish that I had lived in the days of August the Strong, as I feel sure I should have preferred him as a father-in-law, for he, too, had an Austrian Archduchess as a daughter-in-law. His son and heir became a convert to Catholicism, and was received in the church of Milan, then an Austrian province. The Governor of Milan, who was an Austrian Archduke, had a very fascinating daughter, Maria-Josepha, whom Prince Frederick-August fell in love with, and promptly married. The young Archduchess who was the aunt of the Empress Maria-Theresa

was excessively plain, and almost dwarfish, but she was very clever and, as I have previously stated, very fascinating.

The newly married couple made a State entry into Dresden, and the bride was attended by two excessively pretty ladies-in-waiting, who alighted first, when the carriage stopped. August the Strong, who was standing in readiness to receive his new daughter-in-law, concluded that the lovely girl who stepped out first was the Archduchess, and at once took her in his arms and embraced her with paternal fervour. He was perfectly dismayed when he found out his mistake, and turning to his son, he said, with cold contempt: "Monsieur, j'aurais cru que vous auriez eu meilleur goût."

The Elector was a gallant man, so, to console the lady-in-waiting for not having the pleasure of being his daughter-in-law, he shortly afterwards made her his mistress.

There is a story about the Archduchess Maria-Josepha, after she became Electress of Saxony. During the war with Prussia, Frederick the Great entered Dresden, and insisted upon opening the muniment room at the Castle. The Electress refused to allow this; she barricaded the door with her own person, and stubbornly defied both the King and his famous Grenadiers.

"Majestät," said she, "you can enter this room only when you carry me away."

Frederick was not exactly a chivalrous person, and he forthwith ordered his soldiers to remove the Electress. The Grenadiers at once picked her up, but the tiny dwarfish creature kicked and scratched with so much telling effect, that the process of carrying her away from the muniment room was no easy task.

August the Strong used sometimes to visit the Emperor at Vienna, and on one occasion he was given a bedroom which he was told had the reputation of being haunted. After a heavy dinner, the Elector retired to bed, and he was just dozing off when he heard the clanking of chains and saw a tall white figure moving about the room. As he was very strong-minded and also very tired he turned over, paid no attention to the ghost, and was soon fast asleep. The next morning the Emperor asked him what sort of a night he had passed, and August replied that he had slept excellently. That night the same thing happened, and again the Emperor made the same inquiries.

"Why on earth do you trouble yourself so about my rest?" inquired the Elector, and he inwardly thought that there must be some reason for it.

When the ghost next made its appearance,

August did not turn over and go to sleep, but jumping out of bed he seized the expostulating spectre and flung it out of the window. Next morning the Emperor was informed that his guest had slept better than ever.

"I saw the ghost," remarked August, and he added laconically; "I'll show him to you." He opened the window, and showed his horrified host a huddled heap lying in the courtyard below, and a pair of broken legs served to remind the practical joker that it was very unwise to play the ghost for the benefit of August the Strong.

When the Elector returned from Vienna he stopped at a wayside forge to have one of the horses shod. The blacksmith did not do his work well, so August, who was a man of tremendous physical strength, took the horseshoe in his hands, and without any effort broke it in two. The smith was so frightened that he thought the traveller was his Satanic majesty himself and he bolted, leaving the forge to its fate, and only returned when he imagined his strange visitor was far on his way.

August the Strong gave interesting dinners to his friends in the famous banqueting-hall at the Castle of Moritzburg. During the meal he was wont to summon two of his State trumpeters who stationed themselves on the terrace.

The Elector would then pick up a trumpeter in each hand and hold them out at arms' length for five minutes while they played the fanfare, and when they had finished he dropped them on the grass plot beneath the terrace. Having thus given his guests a demonstration of his strength, the meal continued, and the trumpeters washed away the memory of their bruises in bumpers of good red wine.

CHAPTER IX

Motherhood : Birth of the Crown Prince : A quarrel with my father-in-law : Popular enthusiasm : "Our Louisa" : Domesticity : Country life : Mathilde and the strawberries : An "enfant terrible" : The crêche : The Socialist's baby

THE happiest day of my life was when I knew I had hopes of becoming a mother. I felt carried away with joy and thankfulness as I realised that I, who adored children, would before many months have a little baby of my own to love and care for. I planned the layette myself, making up my mind that my child should wear simple, practical garments, not "flimsies" of lace and ribbon, and my ideas were admirably carried out by the firm to whom I gave the order. The cradle, I decided, must be a copy of our own gilt bronze one at Salzburg, and mamma gave me the sweetest basket, in which my last little sister had lain.

As the time for my accouchement drew near, I often speculated in my romantic way about the future destiny of my child. I had experienced so much coldness from my husband's family

that I was longing for something to love, something that would be my own. "I shan't be a princess to my baby," I mused; "I shall just be its mother, whom it can love to its heart's content, and there won't be a single question of etiquette to trouble ourselves about when we are together."

My husband shared my joy, and he was kindness itself to me. He was so good and affectionate that I had nothing to complain of. And Oh, how I wish that in those early days when I felt sore and rebuffed I had told him how miserable I was! Perhaps he would have understood me, but pride made me keep my troubles to myself.

My eldest son, the Crown Prince of Saxony, was born on January 15, 1893, after forty-eight hours of dreadful anxiety and suffering. The Royal Family waited in the next room, and Queen Carola repeatedly came in to see me. She had never had a child, and I remember how she kept on saying, "Poor dear! poor dear!" and when she was not looking critically at me through her lorgnettes, she was losing her handkerchief and fidgeting about trying to find it. The doctors gave me chloroform at the end, and the first thing I remember after I opened my eyes was hearing a tiny, feeble cry in the next room. Something I had never felt before thrilled me as

MY HUSBAND AND MYSELF WITH OUR ELDEST CHILD [FIVE WEEKS OLD]

I realised that this cry proceeded from my own child; then my husband came into the bedroom carrying a little, flannel-wrapped bundle, and bending over me he put my first-born son into my arms.

I half-smothered the baby with kisses, and when I felt how entirely this helpless little creature depended on me, my whole heart and soul went out to it. Of course, I wished to nurse my child. I was young and healthy, so it seemed to me only right; but my father-in-law, with his usual assumption of authority, forbade it, saying: "Princesses don't do that sort of thing."

When he found that I meant to have my own way, he did not oppose me for the time being, and so for a few days my baby and I were left in peace. On the fourth day, however, the doctors told me that I must not continue to nurse my child, who was given over to a wet nurse selected by them, and, needless to say, approved of by my father-in-law. Oh, how I cried my heart out! I tossed from side to side, and every hour that passed without my baby made me long for him more than ever. The doctors were afraid lest I should fret myself into a fever, but they were obdurate, and I was inconsolable. I had so dreamed of being a mother in every sense of the word that this was a bitter

disappointment, and I angrily told my father-in-law that he ought not to deny me the right of performing my maternal duties.

The Saxon people were overjoyed when the salute of 101 guns announced the birth of a prince, and there was wild enthusiasm in Dresden. The dear people showered presents on me and the all-important baby, and I was much touched by the gifts of dresses, socks, shoes, flowers, and letters full of affectionate regard which I received from all classes.

My little son was christened in the chapel of the Taschenberg Palace, which is a most curious edifice, containing the relics of ten thousand saints.

A royal christening takes place twenty-four hours after the child's birth, and my children all wore the beautiful lace robe and cap and were carried on the lace-covered cushion which had been originally made in Saxony for my half-sister, Marie-Antoinette. A curious ceremony occurs six weeks after a princess of Saxony has had her first child. She sits, wearing a beautiful toilette, in one of the State apartments, and the baby, screaming or sleeping as the case may be, lies in its cradle beside her. An endless procession of *invités* then defiles before her and the child, and she is obliged to make a deep obeisance as each person passes. Eight hundred

people came to my reception and I was physically weary of the proceedings long before they were over.

I used to pass all the time I could spare with my baby, and I envied with a most jealous envy the nurse who had usurped my rightful place. On December 31 of the same year my second boy, my beloved "Tia," was born. Again there was tremendous joy, and again I came into conflict with my father-in-law on the subject of nursing. As before, he had his way, and it is small wonder that I hated him.

My third son, Ernest, was born on December 9, 1896, and on August 22, 1898, I had a little girl who died at her birth, and I was perilously near losing my own life. On January 24, 1900, Margaret was born, and on September 27, 1901, I gave birth to another daughter, Maria-Alix.

I found all the happiness I wanted with my dear babies, and I was so proud and pleased when they were admired out of doors. I have nothing but love and gratitude for the Saxon people; they welcomed me on the first day I arrived in Dresden, and I think I have kept my place in their hearts ever since. They, as human beings, felt with me in my joys and sorrows, the barriers of palace walls never existed between us, and the title which I value more than any other

is that of "Our Louisa," which they bestowed on me.

One day when I was in a shop a large crowd gathered outside and waited for me. Directly I saw the people I allowed them to come close and clasp the hands of the present Crown Prince, who was then a fat, rosy, fair-haired boy of a year old. It somehow was always natural for me to *be* natural in everything I did, and the people understood this perfectly and never misconstrued me or my actions.

When my father-in-law saw these demonstrations of affection, he said, satirically: "What a bid you make for popularity, Louisa," a remark which both wounded and offended me, as I had never thought of doing such a thing.

I always interested myself in my servants, who gave me their wholehearted service; every morning I arranged the menu for the day with the chef; I often went into the kitchens to see for myself how certain "plats" were prepared, and as I was always over-anxious that everything should be faultless when we gave a State dinner, I sometimes even used to go down in my dinner-gown directly my toilette was completed, to assure myself that all was going on well! I inherited this love of housekeeping from my father, whose excellent training had not been wasted, and I could cook quite a good dinner unaided. Once a year,

during our residence in the country, I regularly prepared and cooked the dinner, and I remember that Frederick-August was especially pleased when the menu consisted of potato soup, boiled beef, roast chicken, and various kinds of sweets.

I loved those days in the country. I was more untrammelled there, and my husband and I led the happiest and simplest of lives together. I cut the asparagus and picked the strawberries, and this fruit brings to my mind an anecdote of Mathilde.

One evening she and my father-in-law were dining with us in the country, and that year the strawberries were exceptionally fine and plentiful. When they were handed round, Mathilde heaped her plate up so high that the berries fell over the side, to the ever-growing interest of two little pairs of eyes, which were watching her intently; and the children were greatly struck when Mathilde crowned the Monte Rosa of strawberries with a Mont Blanc of sugar.

I had always impressed on the children that greediness was a most horrible failing, and the sight of Mathilde's plate so shocked darling "Tia," that he forgot his usual good manners, and exclaimed in distressed tones: "Look, Mamma, Aunt Mathilde has taken all the strawberries, see what a mess she is making!"

I tried to silence this observant *enfant*

terrible, but suddenly my father-in-law, who was rather deaf, said, "Eh? What? What's Tia saying?"

Of course, I dared not repeat what he had actually said, and it was all I could do to prevent Mathilde from boxing her nephew's ears.

The children were constantly with me in the country; I washed and dressed them, played with them, taught them their simple little prayers, and if they were ill I never left them day or night. They were my pride and my dearest possessions, and they repaid all my devotion by growing up beautiful, healthy children, who were both natural and obedient. I always allowed their individualities to develop freely, because I was determined that they should have a chance of becoming broad-minded, and, in future days, captains of their souls.

I never see a fruit-laden cherry-tree without thinking of those bygone summers when the children and I used to go into the orchard to pick the cherries. I climbed a ladder and threw down the scarlet fruit to the dear little expectant hands. Oh, happy days, spent with my loved ones, vanished now for ever! The summer always has regrets for me; the smell of the hay, the scent of roses, the long, drowsy days and the warm still nights, all stab me with the memories which I shall carry with me to the grave.

MY ELDEST SON, GEORGE, CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY [IURY]

Our country life was spent almost entirely out of doors; we played tennis, rode and drove, and picnicked in the hayfields; and I always cut the flowers for the table and arranged them myself. The children and I dusted the books and *bric-à-brac* together, and it was the prettiest sight imaginable to watch the tiny boys trying to imitate "Mamma." I think that my son Christian ("Tia") possesses many of the characteristics of our family. He was a pretty child; now he is a very handsome youth, and he was, and is now, warm-hearted and affectionate. I am told that he greatly resembles my father in the days of his youth, and I am glad of it. George, who is Crown Prince of Saxony, and his brother "Erni," were also dear boys, and I believe they are most promising and nice-minded. The little girls were sweet children, but I hear that Margaret is very much "princess" in all that she says and does.

I am sure that the maternal instinct is the strongest force within me, and I always had, even as a child, to "mother" something. I was not content with adoring my own babies, but I felt obliged to worship other people's as well. I founded a crêche in the country; and as it was always full to overflowing with babies, I simply revelled there in a world made up of little children. I used to wash and dress them, I

romped on the floor with them, and allowed them to pull my hair and hug me just as much as ever they liked.

One day I was carrying a pretty baby up and down in the sunny garden outside the house, when I noticed a workman who was critically watching me over the palings which separated the garden from the road.

I smiled and said "Good morning," and as I came near him I could see from the look of love and pride in his eyes that he was the father of the baby. "You must love this sweet little one," I said, for the baby was crowing with joy and holding out its hands.

"Who are *you?*" asked the man abruptly.

"I am the Princess Louisa," I answered.

"*You*, the Princess!"

"Certainly."

"Well, if you are the Princess, you had better know at once that this child belongs to a despised Socialist—who hates all 'Royalties,' and wishes them at the devil," said the man, rudely and defiantly.

I looked at him: then I said very quietly, "Whether this child belongs to a Socialist or not is all one to me; I only see a sweet baby."

The man burst into tears.

"Pardon me, Royal Highness," he stammered.

"*Now* I understand why you are called 'Our Louisa:'" I afterwards heard that he told his own "Section" he could never again hate "Royalties," after having seen me carrying his child.

CHAPTER X

The Court circle : " Noah's Ark " : Calico and crochet : Drink and gambling : The German Emperor : His power in Saxony : The invasion of England : The Archduke Franz-Ferdinand as a possible ally : The Opera at Dresden : I see it from the gallery : The affair of the collier : " Faust " at the Court Theatre : Royal visitors

THE Court circle at Dresden, during the whole time I lived in Saxony, was composed of the most narrow-minded, evil-speaking, and conceited collection of human beings it is possible to imagine. I nicknamed it " Noah's Ark," and, indeed, some of the people with whom I came into contact might almost have been described as antediluvian. I used to wonder why they existed, for, like most superfluous persons, they had a great knack of boring others excessively and annoying them in small ways at the same time.

The Saxon aristocracy have the rooted idea that their mission in life is to keep up appearances, and I think they really believe that God created them solely to show an admiring world what it is

possible for paragons of perfection to be. Their pride of birth and rank is nauseating to any one who is intellectual and broad-minded; and, under the pretext of safeguarding their own virtue, they pry, even by subterranean methods, into affairs which do not concern them in the least. They live, move, and have their being merely as automata, and they are as stiff and expressionless as the Dutch dolls of our childhood. The majority of the aristocracy were not over blessed with wealth, and the question of dress did not trouble the women to any great extent. They had no idea of elegance, and they were, as a rule, too stupid and heavy even to indulge in a harmless flirtation. I used to look at some of these ladies in despair, but as their appearance at the Court balls gave a touch of humour to these deadly dull functions, I had after all something for which to be grateful.

I remember that on one occasion a girl slipped on the parquet floor of the ballroom, and fell most ungracefully in a heap, from which there presently emerged a pair of unattractive limbs covered with the most extraordinary hose. Silk stockings had evidently not been considered necessary, so she had economically re-footed a pair of cotton ones. She wore a red and white twill petticoat, and a glimpse of her lingerie conclusively proved that the young lady was a believer in crochet

and calico, and scorned such luxuries as lawn and lace.

The upper middle class, and the commercial community are the backbone of the Saxon nation, and they are happily free from the fatuous failings and dulness of the aristocracy. They alone are the "intellectuals," who *think* and *understand*, and, I may add, the only ones who count in my estimation.

The prosperous merchant is better bred and far more agreeable than any pompous Maréchal de la Cour, and the ordinary clever lawyer or medical man is superior to any so-called clever courtier. When I kicked mentally against the impossible life I was obliged to lead, I always wished that I could have a sort of spring cleaning of my entourage, and that those who were beyond redemption could be consigned to the lumber-rooms.

The aristocracy gamble and drink a great deal too much, and the young officers make up for not having much money by owing all they can. Saxony is dominated by the Emperor William, who watches events from afar, and nobody dares do anything in direct opposition to the Mars of Berlin. The army is absolutely influenced by him, and although the fact is always denied, he alone is the unseen ruling power, and although there is much secret discontent, it never becomes open rebellion.

If I had remained in Saxony, I think I should have been friendly with the Emperor, as I never shared the mistrust of him which seems to be the prevalent feeling whenever he is discussed. I am sure he does not entertain any real affection for England, and no people are better aware of this than the English themselves. Whenever he visits the English Royal Family, it is amusing to see how the newspapers dwell on the ties of blood which connect the two houses, but everybody knows that, "au fond," William would never allow consideration for his mother's relatives to weigh one moment against the interests of his own country.

I do not think there is any possibility of the "great invasion" taking place for some time. The Emperor knows that the financial state of Germany is not favourable at the moment for war, and he is also fully aware that, even if the English army leaves a great deal to be desired, the navy is unspoilt, and England, even in her partial decadence, still remains the Mistress of the Seas.

I do not think the Kaiser will ever become the ally of Austria in a war against England. A great deal has been written lately about my cousin Franz-Ferdinand, the future Emperor of Austria, who is supposed to favour this idea, but I am sure he has no wish for hostilities

with any nation; at any rate, when I knew him he was the most non-political personage possible. I saw him just before his marriage with the clever Countess Chotek, and he took no pains to conceal from me how distasteful to him was the idea of becoming Emperor. "I prefer shooting," he said, "and I like a quiet life; I never *could* be worried with politics." I have heard that since his marriage, Franz-Ferdinand has been entirely dominated by the Jesuits, that his health is precarious, and that he is looked upon by his doctors as a consumptive. Two years ago he went to Egypt, and was supposed to return 'cured," but I hear rumours that he is again suffering from lung trouble.

The "five-o'clock" exists in Dresden society, but coffee and cakes are substituted for tea and bread and butter. It is a hateful function, but one dear to the hostess and her visitors, as, between the intervals of "gobbling" their cakes this is the only word to describe their method of eating), they busily devour other people's reputations. I was hedged about with etiquette to an extent which no outsider can imagine, and my spirit was truly in prison. Whenever I tried to be my natural self I was at once "suppressed" by my husband's family, and although Frederick-August was a very good comrade, he never seemed able

to shake off a childish dread of his father. I used to say that my lady of the bedchamber was the only person who was allowed to "take a liberty," for she was permitted by custom to enter my bedroom unannounced whenever she pleased.

The one oasis to me in this dreary desert of Court life was the Opera, which I attended as often as I possibly could. Both the Opera and the Court Theatre are under the complete control of the King of Saxony, who pays all expenses connected with them; the Opera used to cost three million marks a year.

How I loved the performances! Stage, artistes, and audience faded away, and I only heard the beautiful voices, and the exquisite music which filled my soul with ecstasy, and transported me to another world where I could roam fancy free and be happy.

Of course, as patrons of the Opera, the Royal Family were always more or less in evidence, and I sometimes wondered, as I looked round the crowded house, whether the majority of the audience really appreciated music, or went merely in a kind of follow-my-leader way to hear it. I did not concern myself with the feelings of the dressed-up dolls I so cordially detested, but I was curious to know the opinions of the *thinking* class. At last my curiosity

became so great that I decided to find out for myself, and I made up my mind to see the opera and royalty from the gallery as an ordinary spectator. I took my children's old nurse into my confidence, and, needless to say, she was at first shocked and alarmed at my proposal.

"It is impossible, Imperial Highness," said she; "imagine what would happen if you were recognised, and your august father-in-law heard about it." I overruled her objections, however, and she gradually entered into the spirit of the adventure; so one evening she informed my attendants, with the utmost gravity, that "the Princess had a bad headache, and desired to be left entirely undisturbed."

We lost no time in making our preparations, and with the aid of a red wig, some skilful "make-up," a black dress and a plain hat, I transformed myself into one of the "gods." We stole out of the palace by a side entrance and luckily were quite unobserved. It was a fine, cold winter's night, and the frosty air, and my sense of adventure, gave me a delightful feeling of exhilaration and freedom. We walked through the snow to the Opera House, and I still felt like a joyful truant, when I paid for our seats and at last found myself in a tightly packed row of the gallery.

I was intensely excited, and very pleased to be with my dear people. I was quite happy, and when my neighbours chatted to me I was more delighted than ever, and smiled to myself as I thought how they would have stared had they known who I was. From my coign of vantage I watched the arrival of my "illustrious" relations with tremendous interest. First the King and Queen took their seats in the royal box; then Mathilde made her appearance in her famous framboise gown, then came John-George, dreaming of Popes, and last my kind, good-looking husband, with his father. Directly the "gods" saw the King and Queen, a volley of comments arose on all sides, and I had a hard task to keep from laughing when I heard the remarks of the people on their rulers.

"What a lot of mummies they look," said a young girl contemptuously.

"Mathilde is too mean to buy a new dress, that's an old friend she's wearing," remarked another.

"What a pity she doesn't take something to bring down her fat," said a third.

"How severe Prince George looks; it would do him good to rehearse the ballet instead of going so much to church," and every one tittered at this audacious sally, myself included, for the mental picture of my father-in-law instructing

gauzy-skirted coryphées in the steps in which they should go, was too much for my gravity.

And then the question passed from mouth to mouth, "Where's Louisa? She's late, perhaps she's not coming. What a pity! She's the only human being of the lot," and so on, until the curtain rose.

I remained for one act, and I was astonished to discover how well the people really appreciated music, and how much they knew about technique and style; it was a revelation to me, but it proved to my entire satisfaction that my idea of the mental acquirements of the middle class was quite right.

I took tea with my unsuspecting family after their return from the Opera and, as I looked at my father-in-law, I thought that, had he known of my escapade, I should doubtless have been immured in a convent for the rest of my natural life.

The Opera is always associated in my mind with an incident which I shall describe as the "Affair of the Collier." As every one knows, the emeralds of the King of Saxony have a world-wide reputation, and when I was married, they were given me to wear, set mixed with diamonds in a tiara, necklace, and bracelets. I was delighted to possess the wonderful stones, but I did not like the heavy settings, so I

asked, and received, permission to have the necklace made smaller.

The beauty of the stones, and my sense of the artistic, resulted in my ordering an entirely new "collier" in a lovely Renaissance design. I decided to wear it at a gala performance, and chose a delightful rose chiffon gown to act as a foil to its mysterious green splendour ; and it was with conscious pride in my appearance that I seated myself in my box opposite to the King and Queen, who were on the other side of the Opera House.

Directly they saw me they stared, and stared again, with opera-glasses levelled at my collier. A whispered consultation took place, and I was summoned to the royal box. The King received me very coldly, and asked me how I *dared* alter the family heirlooms.

"Well," I said quite unabashed, "I *dared* because the setting was hideous. The emeralds were given to me to wear, and I did not like them in their original setting, and I think they are ten times more beautiful now."

There was a frightful scene. Voices were raised, and a violent altercation took place which afforded great interest to the people in the stalls who listened with all their ears to this undignified quarrel.

We seemed always to be bickering about

something, and I remember how cross my father-in-law was over a performance of *Faust* at the Court Theatre. It will be remembered that one passage in the play speaks very disrespectfully about the insatiate greed of the Roman Catholic Church, and this so offended Prince George that he ordered the actor who declaimed it to "cut it out."

When *Faust* was next played, the actor out of sheer bravado did not omit the lines, with the result that my father-in-law at once left the theatre, and he was mean enough to insinuate that it was I who had instigated the actor's defiance of orders.

We rarely received Royal visitors at Dresden; the late King of Siam came one year, and great festivities took place in his honour. His nephew, who was a clever man, accompanied him, and I was both interested and amused at his view of our Court; the King himself was stupid. He invariably remarked to every one he met, "How did you enjoy your trip?" but as nobody knew to what trip he referred, it was difficult to answer. Chulalonkorn visited the galleries, but the only pictures he appreciated were studies from the nude, and he was sublimely indifferent to other masterpieces.

The Duke of Connaught also came to Dresden, I fancy with a "Garter" mission, and

I was most favourably impressed by him. He seemed to possess the qualities which endear their owners to every one who knows them, and I thought he was a man of sound judgment and no little skill in military matters.

CHAPTER XI

Why and wherefore : Explanations : Mixed blood : A story of the French Revolution : The bicycle craze : I am reprimanded : Petty tyranny : The pearl necklace : The recipe for a popular Queen of Saxony

I NOW approach the most difficult part of my story, and that is an endeavour to show the outside world the conditions and events which finally led up to my departure from Dresden. It is a Herculean labour for any maligned woman to clear her character effectually when once it has been besmirched, and I am sure the world can never realise what I have suffered through Court intrigue.

Looking at myself analytically I wonder what I ever did to inspire my husband's family with the malignant hatred they invariably displayed towards me. I came to Dresden little more than a girl, but with a woman's sense of my responsibility and duties; I was quite willing to try to please, and I am vain enough to think that I endeared myself to the people; it was only those who considered themselves

my equals who treated me with persistent coldness and mistrust.

I have always wondered why a Habsburg princess was selected as a wife for Frederick-August, especially one of my branch. The mixture of French, Italian, and Habsburg blood in my veins, should have made any stolid family think seriously before they asked the possessor to marry one of its members, for, as my father-in-law said, with perfect truth, the Habsburg-Bourbon temperament is peculiar. All my ancestors had bequeathed to me something of their various individualities. I inherited from the Bourbons my love of the beautiful, my delight in all that appealed to the finer senses, and their supreme disregard for the opinions of those they disliked or despised. The imperious will of the "Sun King" became in me a compelling force urging me to make myself and my actions felt, and I revolted at the narrowness of the circle in which I found myself. Just as Louis XIV. transformed waste lands into the emerald parterres of Versailles, and eventually made the wilderness blossom like the rose, so I longed to remove all obstacles, and beautify my life. My ancestor could transplant trees, construct aqueducts, raise stately palaces as if by magic; but all these were simple things compared

with the task I set myself after I came to Dresden.

From the Habsburgs I had as a legacy that absolute independence of thought and deed, which has always been so strange in members of an Imperial House hide-bound by etiquette and tradition. Most of us Habsburgs have artistic tastes, most of us desire to live lives built on large and noble lines, and most of us have that curious mental "kink" which has driven some to suicide, banishment, or self-effacement.

I think I have always possessed some of the strong masculine will of Maria-Theresa, and Marie-Antoinette certainly bequeathed me her courage in trouble. Like her, I have experienced calumny, gross indignities, misrepresentations, bitter partings, and like her (until now) I have always disdained to explain. I am sure that if I had lived during the French Revolution I should have been as supremely indifferent to my fate as the great-great-grandmother of a friend of mine. The story goes that when it came to her turn to ascend the steps of the guillotine, she was accompanied by a girl who, like herself, had been a *habituée* of Versailles.

These ladies were the last to suffer, and the blood of the other victims had made the

MYSELF IN FANCY DRESS, AS MARIE-ANTOINETTE

planks slippery and wet. Turning to her friend the elder woman said, "My dear, pray be careful, this horrid mess will soil your skirt," and she gathered up her dress to prevent even the hem becoming stained, seemingly oblivious of the fact that in a few seconds both she and her companion would be out of a world in which disregard of the *canaille*, and attention to the *convenances* were the only things that mattered.

The unfortunate tendency of the Habsburg to escape for a time from anything irksome, became with Marie Antoinette a desire to play the Fermière at Trianon, and with me a wish to lead a free life; but unluckily Dresden did not possess a Trianon, and, Frederick-August was not strong-willed enough to call a substitute into existence, so I was kept in perpetual restraint. I shall never blame my husband for the unwilling part he played in the tragedy of my life. The King of Saxony is an absolutely good man; he is affectionate, upright, pure-minded, and his fatal weakness of character in great crises is solely due to his inborn indecision of temperament. Frederick-August can act well for himself and others in the ordinary things of life, but directly he is confronted with a situation that agitates or perplexes him, he loses

his grip and relies on the opinions of stronger minds.

My worries really began actively when the bicycle craze affected Dresden society. I was very anxious to learn, and asked my husband whether he had any objection to my doing so. He was quite in favour of it, and I arranged to take private lessons, always, of course, accompanied by a lady-in-waiting.

I enjoyed myself thoroughly at first, but my pleasure was only fleeting, for one day I was somewhat hastily summoned by King Albert and Queen Carola on a matter of private importance. They received me with marked coldness, and the Queen said in displeased tones, "I hear, Louisa, that you are learning the bicycle."

"Certainly," I replied.

"Well," said the King, "bicycling is not an amusement for a princess, and you ought to know it, Louisa."

"Yes," chimed in Queen Carola, "and even if you had contemplated it, you should have asked my permission before you took lessons."

"I had my husband's permission," I answered coldly; "I considered it quite sufficient."

"Frederick-August's permission does not signify," replied the Queen. "You apparently ignore etiquette; please remember that *I* am

the Queen, and that it is your duty to consult me in everything you do."

I was furious, and told her that my father allowed my sisters to bicycle, and what he thought right, must *be* right. All my arguments were received with supercilious disdain, and I left in a tempest of anger and wounded pride. When I reached home I poured out my wrongs to Frederick-August, who, good soul, was all for peace. I therefore let the matter drop, and did not go on with my lessons.

Some days elapsed, and I received a little note from the Queen, asking me to come and see her.

"My dear child," she began. "I've really something very unpleasant to say."

I waited in silence for the gathering storm to break, but, as the thunder still seemed in the distance, I said, with the courage of perfect innocence,

"Well, tell me what it is, Auntie."

She hesitated, and then answered hurriedly :

"Well, Louisa, Madame X. came to-day on purpose to inform me that last evening you were seen in the Grosser Garten riding a bicycle in KNICKERBOCKERS, escorted by two actors from the Court Theatre."

I looked at her in silent amazement, and then burst out laughing.

"What a *lie*," I cried. "Why, since our last

interview when you expressed a wish that I should not ride a bicycle I've discontinued my lessons." Then anger completely mastered me at the thought of the malice which had inspired such a report, and I said: "Who is your informant? Tell me at once—bring her to me, I wish to speak to her."

"No, no, Louisa, that's impossible, I have promised not to tell."

This made me angrier than ever. "How *dare* you," I cried, "accuse me, and not allow me to face my accuser?"

I knew that this story was assiduously circulated all over Dresden, and I was contemptuously amused at it, so when I was again sent for by Queen Carola about a month afterwards, I said, without any preamble: "Am I arraigned once more?"

The Queen was all smiles.

"Arraigned? Certainly not, dearest Louisa. I've sent for you to tell you that you may ride the bicycle after all, because I have just learned that the German Emperor allows his sister, Princess Frederick-Leopold, to ride one in Berlin!" . . . I looked at the Queen, who was beaming with joy at the seal of approval set on bicycles by the Emperor, and I felt some pity for this example-swayed old lady.

"Well, Auntie," I observed satirically, "your

opinions are easily changed, that's something to be thankful for, at any rate."

These petty tyrannies soon began to have a bad effect on me: I grew hard and regardless of what I said, and occasionally did things out of sheer defiance to the existing powers. My father-in-law never lost an opportunity of goading me to desperation, and he was usually most vulgar in his methods.

Once when we were dining at the Castle of Pillnitz, I was wearing a beautiful rope of three hundred and seventy pearls which had formerly belonged to my half-sister Marie-Antoinette. Suddenly the string broke, and the pearls rolled in all directions over the carpet, under tables and chairs and in all kinds of impossible places. Naturally active search at once commenced for the loose pearls, and the Chamberlain and most of the officers present very good-naturedly went down on their knees to look for them.

My father-in-law stopped eating and regarded the proceedings with an affectation of cynical interest; then he slowly remarked: "Ah . . . in the rescuers of the pearls, we doubtless see these fortunate gentlemen in whom the Princess takes a tender interest." He never lost an opportunity of annoying me, and at last I regarded him with positive hatred. My children also disliked him, and whenever they were told

they were going to visit their grandfather, they would scream and roll on the floor—in fact do anything to avoid meeting him.

I remember once when he unexpectedly confronted the rolling tangle of angry little boys, he looked from them to me, and said: "It is easy to see what kind of an education you give your children, Louisa."

My mistress of the robes once strongly advised me to model myself on the pattern of Queen Carola, and harangued me somewhat on these lines: "We are quite satisfied with you, Imperial Highness, if you consent to open exhibitions, receive people agreeably, show yourself in pretty toilettes, and chat freely—when occasion offers. What do you want more? It is your destiny to become a Queen, why do you try to escape from it? You must be quite aware that it doesn't do for a Queen to have 'feelings.' She is selected to continue her husband's dynasty, and what more does she expect?"

"Are queens ever allowed to be human?" I asked.

"Certainly, Imperial Highness, a queen may love her husband, but she must not be vulgarly demonstrative in her affection. It must be conducted on the lines of etiquette even in intimate moments, and she must not attempt to display the emotions of an ordinary woman."

MY YOUNGEST SON, PRINCE ERNEST-HENRY
OF SAXONY [ERNI]

"Ah," I remarked. "I suppose that a Queen of Saxony who will be welcome and popular at Court ought to be selected from a manufactory of automatons, for a female automaton seems to be all you require. So long as it is well dressed, *bien coiffée*, and can bow, smile, eat, and walk, it will suffice (always of course *bien entendu* that it can provide an heir). Listen," I added emphatically; "a living, loving woman with a heart and brain, who knows that a world exists outside the palace, will always suffer through creatures like you with your hateful opinions and your appalling ignorance of life," and the conversation ended.

CHAPTER XII

Sturm und Drang : Death of King Albert : An uncomfortable journey : The woman in black : At Sibyllenort : Family disputes : "Le Roi est mort" : We return to Dresden : A thirsty princess : I meet the German Emperor : "My political friend" : King Albert's funeral : A wreath of waterlilies : The spectral cat : The midwife's prophecy

In the summer of 1902 we were in the country, but our usually pleasant holiday was clouded by the serious condition of King Albert, who was on the point of death. The King and Queen were staying at the Castle of Sibyllenort near Breslau in Silesia, a beautiful residence given by the last Duke of Brunswick to the then King of Saxony. The castle contains four hundred rooms, and it was the scene of many scandalous orgies in the later 'forties. The Duke, who was a great admirer of the fair sex, had a private theatre there, and the ballet was composed of numerous pretty girls, whom he kept in harem-like seclusion. I remember seeing some rather startling pictures when I visited the castle as a girl of sixteen, but these were very properly banished by Queen

Carola's orders, and Sibyllenort became a highly decorous royal residence. The King was constantly approached by the Prussian Government, who wished to purchase the estate, but he would not sell, as he liked the place and used often to stay there.

I received my first intimation that I had become Crown Princess of Saxony on the telephone, when I was rung up from Sibyllenort, and told the news of King Albert's death. We at once left for Breslau, with all the usual rush and excitement of an unexpected journey. My maids were seated in their *coupé*, when a woman in black, carrying a covered basket, got in just as the train was starting. The maids naturally wondered who she was, and somewhat resented the intrusion on their privacy by a stranger, but the woman in black soon satisfied them as to her identity.

"Well," she began, "I had indeed a rush to catch this train, I don't know what would have happened to me if I had missed it."

Receiving looks of interest, she went on: "I dare say you wonder who I am—and what is my business. Well, I am the woman chosen by the late King's physicians to assist at the autopsy; I consider it a great honour."

The maids were rather disconcerted, and the woman continued: "You see, I'm very reliable,

and you might remember my name if a death takes place in the Crown Prince's family!"

At this juncture the wicker basket heaved convulsively; the assistant of physicians opened it, and out jumped a lovely little Dachshund. "This is my sweet dog," explained the owner. "I was terrified lest I should be forbidden to bring him with me, and we don't like to be separated, do we, dearest?" she said addressing her pet. This incident, which revealed a very human side of her character, made the maids more tolerant of the woman's profession, and they became quite friendly long before Breslau was reached.

It was a dreadful journey; we travelled all night, and nobody had any rest as the sleeping car was infested by fleas which came out in battalions, thirsting for our blood. John-George accompanied us, and bored us extremely, by assuming the airs of a mentor and overwhelming Frederick-August with good advice.

We arrived at Breslau next morning, and drove in the royal carriages to Sibyllenort which we reached about 7.30 A.M. My father-in-law was waiting to receive us, and I was much shocked at his smiling and jubilant expression in the house of death.

Suddenly a voice screamed in strident tones:

"Come in, don't waste time, we must have breakfast. I'm absolutely perishing with hunger."

The voice was Mathilde's, but I ignored her request and insisted on first going to offer my condolences to Queen Carola, and we were conducted to the late King's bedroom, where his widow remained with her beloved dead.

King Albert lay on the bed, beautiful and calm, and his hands were crossed above the fine linen sheet, strewn with red roses, which covered him. Queen Carola knelt on a prie-Dieu at the foot of the bed, where two candles were burning, and as I looked at the silent figures, a great wave of sadness came over me, and my heart overflowed with pity for the grief-stricken mourner. I did not say much to her, for I could see she desired to be left alone, so I just kissed her in token of my sympathy, and left the room as quietly as I had entered it.

It was, indeed, a contrast after the peaceful rose-scented chamber of death to find myself at breakfast with the King and his excited family. My father-in-law simply revelled in his new dignity, and kept on ringing the bell furiously, solely for the pleasure of hearing the fawning flunkeys address him as "Your Majesty"; it was life to him, and he seemed to me positively indecent in his unrestrained joy.

During an interval of taking coffee he turned to us and said coarsely: "Well, goodness knows, I've waited long enough to become King, in fact

I was tired of waiting. I would have made you Regent, Frederick-August, but you are a useless creature, and, as for you Louisa, you may as well understand that you have all your work cut out before you can become a Queen."

"Yes," chimed in Mathilde, "Louisa is indeed far too democratic; she takes a ridiculous interest in the people, and never remembers the duties of her station."

I did not answer, and she continued: "Now we must clearly understand our respective positions. I, as the King's eldest daughter, shall naturally take precedence of you, Louisa."

"Certainly *not*," said my husband angrily. "Louisa is Crown Princess, and she will therefore precede you."

I was heartily sick of the discussion; so I said carelessly, "Have it your own way cela m'est bien égal." The whole proceedings were disgusting to any one with a grain of sentiment or self-respect. Here was the Royal Family quarrelling and disputing over precedence and money matters before the late King had been dead twelve hours. Even his old servants seemed to have forgotten him, and redoubled their efforts to please the new Sovereign! It was, indeed, a case of "Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!"

As soon as this excessively unpleasant meal

was over, Frederick-August and I were escorted to our apartments by one of the Court officials, who turned and said to me on the way, with great meaning, "Imperial Highness, you are at last *our* Crown Princess, and I hope, as all Saxony hopes, that you will soon become our Queen!"

The funeral ceremonies were magnificent. The King's body was taken to Dresden for interment, and the coffin placed in a railway carriage completely covered inside and outside with ermine, and full of exotic plants and palms. The train went at a walking pace to enable the people to see the last of their King, and we all returned to Dresden together.

It was very hot weather, and Mathilde quenched her thirst at intervals with copious draughts of lager beer. I went to lie down, as I was overtired and overwrought. The train stopped at Bautzen, where my father-in-law alighted and received a deputation of the municipal authorities. He was exceedingly tactless, and made so many impatient remarks about the length of the proceedings that his new subjects nudged each other and looked askance when they heard him say that he didn't care two straws about the dull deputation, and he grumbled and growled unceasingly until we reached Dresden.

It was my duty to meet the German Emperor and the Empress, who came to Dresden to attend King Albert's obsequies, and I drove to the station with my father-in-law. It was the first time we had appeared in public together as King and Crown Princess, and although the crowd was very large, it was not enthusiastic at the sight of the King; a woman, however, recognised me under my heavy crêpe veil, and called out: "Give our Louisa a cheer—we all love her," and then cheering broke out on all sides, which made the King so furious that he had hardly time to recover his equilibrium before the special train from Berlin arrived.

The Emperor greeted me most effusively, and whispered:

"Well, *that's all right;* now you are a step nearer to becoming my political friend."

I drove back to the Castle with the Empress, and the people cheered more freely now that the Imperial couple were in evidence.

After the lying-in-State, King Albert was buried in the royal vault of the chapel. The coffin slowly disappeared from sight of the mourners, on a lift, somewhat similar to that used at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and the body of the King was afterwards placed with those of his ancestors.

When a member of the Saxon Royal Family

dies, the body is opened, and the heart is enclosed in a casket and put on a white satin covered cushion on one side of the coffin; *les entrailles*, in a white satin covered jar, are on the other side, and when the coffin is finally deposited in the vault, these jars stand on a little *étagère* beside it. It is a barbarous custom, which, of course, annuls all risk of premature burial, but then who would ever, I wonder, willingly return to life in the same capacity after having once been a King or Queen?

King Albert loved water-lilies, those cold flowers which never respond to the sun's rays, and only display their beauty under the pallid moon. I therefore ordered a wreath entirely composed of water-lilies, which rested on a bed of palms. A white moiré ribbon, edged with golden fringe, bore our names, and the pet names of his great-nephews and -nieces, our children—"Iury" (George), "Tia" (Frederick-Christian), "Erni" (Ernest-Heinrich), "Ethe" (Margaret), and "Riali" (Maria-Alix), in gold letters.

Shortly after the King's death, I had a very uncanny experience at the chapel of the palace in the Zinzendorf Strasse.

My father-in-law had once told me in a burst of confidence that on several occasions a spectral black cat had been seen on the altar: it was

supposed to presage disaster, and he said he was firmly convinced that the animal was the devil or one of his familiars. I laughed at the story, and advised him to have the spirit exorcised with bell, book, and candle, but I was destined, nevertheless, to see the mysterious cat myself.

In the month of November 1902, I attended Mass with my father-in-law, and suddenly my gaze was arrested by the sight of a huge black cat seated between the candles on the High Altar. I wondered whether any one besides myself saw it, but one glance at the scared faces around me left no room for doubt. The instant that Mass was over Mathilde went to the sacristy and ordered the attendant to turn the black cat out of the chapel, but this was impossible as it was not to be found. The windows and doors were all shut, and it was impossible to guess where the creature had disappeared to. A thorough search was instigated without success, and the mystery remained unsolved. My father-in-law maintained a gloomy silence throughout, and told every one that the occurrence must on no account be mentioned outside the palace. It was certainly odd, to say the least, and whether the black visitor was cat or devil, I saw it plainly, and can vouch for the truth of the story.

Those early days of my poignant sufferings

made me somewhat superstitious. I wondered whether the spectral cat foreshadowed any misfortunes for me, and I often used to think of the strange prophecy which heralded my appearance into this very odd world. The *sage-femme* who attended at my birth had the reputation of being a clairvoyante, and when she took me in her arms she said, looking at me with curious intentness, "This child is destined to wear a crown, but her future will be an unhappy one, and sorrows innumerable will be her portion."

CHAPTER XIII

J'ACCUSE

I ACCUSE Baron George von Metzsch, now Controller of the Royal Household, of being the active instigator of the intrigues which led to my leaving Dresden and to my ultimate expulsion from Saxony.

My arch-enemy possesses the intellectual attainments which I have always admired. He is a good-looking, elegant man, with captivating manners, an iron will, and a ruthless tenacity of purpose that brooks no obstacles, but he does not know the meaning of chivalry or gratitude where his personal interests are involved. He employs creatures beneath contempt to spy and lie for him; and, curiously enough, the serpents who do his bidding never turn upon their master.

I still retain a reluctant admiration for the qualities that make for greatness in this unscrupulous man, although I doubt if he has an enemy who hates him more bitterly than I do. Through him I have been vilified in the eyes of my husband, my family, and my people;

but, although he has tried to suppress me, phœnix-like I rise from the ashes of injustice, and vindicate myself; and I believe that George von Metzsch now considers me an opponent worthy of his steel.

When I arrived in Saxony, fresh from the intellectual pleasures that papa's companionship always afforded me, I was drawn to Von Metzsch, as he appeared to be the only witty and agreeable man in the Court circle. He seemed at that time very desirous of possessing my friendship, and I remember his saying: "We must try to be friends, Imperial Highness, for later on we can act together." We were always on the best of terms until 1897, when our friendship suddenly and definitely came to an end.

In the summer of that year, my husband and I went to stay for a few weeks in Norderney. Von Metzsch was there, and one evening he asked us to sup with him: we were pleased to accept his invitation, and met him at the second-rate restaurant he had named.

When we entered, an obsequious waiter conducted us to the table reserved for Herr von Metzsch, who came forward, greeted me with much empressement, and escorted me to my seat. I looked at the table in silent amazement: there was no tablecloth, no flowers, but only quite ordinary appointments, and in front of me was

a dish covered with a plate. As I grasped all these details, I flushed with anger, for, although I hope I have no false pride, I resented this treatment of myself and Frederick-August as the guests of a subject.

I turned to our host, who was watching me narrowly, although his face wore an inscrutable expression.

"Well, Baron," I asked, "what kind of supper have you had prepared for me?"

"Ah . . ." he replied. "Imperial Highness, knowing as I do the simple tastes of the Habsburgs, I have set some cold ham before you."

I uncovered the dish, and sure enough I saw two small slices of ham. The whole occurrence was so bewildering, that I could find no words to express my disgust and mortification, but I said very quietly, "I shall remember this, and I shall have my revenge."

Von Metzsch started in mock alarm.

"You are surely not offended?" he queried.

"Oh no," said I, and I commenced my supper as though nothing untoward had happened.

I pondered over this extraordinary behaviour, and after a while I invited Von Metzsch and his wife to supper at the best restaurant in Norderney. I ordered a private room, and gave the proprietor carte blanche for flowers, food and

wines. The result of my preparations absolutely staggered Von Metzsch, who sat next me at supper; he kept looking round the room, mentally appraising the cost of the flowers and the choice dishes and wine, and at last he said to me:

"Why have you gone to such lavish expenditure for my entertainment, Imperial Highness?"

I looked at him steadily and then said:

"This, Excellency, is my revenge for the two slices of ham you gave me the other night; later on, *I* shall sit as a Queen at the political supper table, where there will be numerous *plats* for my guests, and then Baron, you will only receive *two small slices* of political influence."

Every one present heard my words, which I could see produced a really startling effect. Von Metzsch never forgot them, and from that moment he became my deadly enemy. I know for a fact that he said, "I mean to ruin this woman, but I will ruin her slowly," and he kept his word.

Von Metzsch was hand and glove with King Albert and my father-in-law, who took him unreservedly into their confidence, and never did anything without consulting him. Mathilde, too, was his ally, and she reported to him all my doings, and enlarged and commented on my harmless eccentricities, unmindful of the fact

that her own peculiarities made her the butt of the Socialist newspapers, and that she was regarded as a huge joke all over Saxony.

George von Metzsch laid his plans with diabolical cunning; his spies were everywhere, and he was so skilful that I was at *that* time never able positively to identify him as the instigator of the infernal machinery which was slowly, but surely, set in motion to undermine my reputation and my happiness.

My husband was the only useless item in Von Metzsch's schemes, for his fine character and purity of mind made him incapable of believing ill of any one, and he steadfastly discountenanced malicious gossip. I was surrounded by enemies, and were it not that my father-in-law is dead, and unable to answer my accusations, I would not hesitate to produce the proofs that I possess of his relentless, vindictive methods towards me.

The Church regarded me with secret dislike, for the priests disapproved of my free-thinking ideas, and the *Modernisme* so hated by the Vatican, that I always displayed. The Court entourage detested me because they knew that I wished to upset the old order of things, and that if ever I became Queen I should inspire sweeping reforms, and make away with the petty injustice and corruption which pervaded everything. My

BARON GEORGE VON METZSCH, THE MAN WHO SAID OF ME, "I WILL RUIN THIS WOMAN, BUT I WILL RUIN HER SLOWLY"

enemies, too, were fully aware that I wielded great influence over my husband, and they feared my friendship with the Emperor William, whom they disliked and dreaded as my possible ally.

I took too much interest in the people to please the Court, and I did not conceal my opinion that a Protestant country like Saxony ought to have a Protestant King, and should not be ruled by a Roman Catholic.

I wished to make my Court an intellectual and artistic centre, and this again was a subject of bitter contention. I alternated between indignant revolt and acute depression, for I realised that I was under constant surveillance, and I was treated like a little girl who requires very strict governesses. Every small action of impulse was magnified into almost criminal eccentricity, my harmless friendships were presented in the light of vulgar flirtations, and I could never show any interest in any one without having some disgraceful ulterior motive attributed to me.

When I was not the object of abuse, my own family were subjected to it, and we were one and all credited with every Habsburg peccadillo and peculiarity. My superior rank was another cause of offence, and at last I grew tired of struggling against such overwhelming odds. I disdained to complain, because I knew that I was represented

as a capricious, hysterical woman who required the firm hand of subjection which is usually supposed to be so efficacious, but, in the majority of cases, has only the ultimate effect of driving its victims to desperation.

Oh, how I suffered in those days! I have often tried to show some nobility of character, and forgive those who injured me so deeply, but I cannot. The iron has entered far too deeply into my soul; forgiveness may come later, but at present I have banished it from my heart. I was like some wild bird that has fallen into the snare of the fowler and is caged for ever more. Often I stood at my window at eventide, and watched the happy hurrying people going on their homeward way, and I envied them so much. They, at any rate, could live as human beings—to me it seemed forbidden to do anything but suffer.

Those people are ingenuous who envy crowned heads, for there are very few of them who would not like to be in some other sphere. The display of regal state is always outwardly attractive, the *mise en scène* is imposing and arresting, but royal personages are, as a rule, very ordinary people after all. Our education unfits us for any other position in life; we can be generous because we have always money at our disposal for charity; we can make ourselves

agreeable because it is part of our training; but when once we become creatures of flesh and blood we lose part of our halo. I often think that it is the pomp and circumstance surrounding royalty which appeal most strongly to the populace, and I am quite sure that the people of Dresden would have appreciated a good circus procession infinitely better than a coronation.

The unceasing persecution went on unchecked; there was not a soul I could trust, and nobody dared tell (so great was the power of Von Metzsch) what the undercurrent of intrigue against me really meant. I felt like a prisoner condemned to death, who is not allowed to know when the sentence will be carried out; it would have been unnerving even to the strongest person, but to me, highly strung and impressionable as I am, it was positive torture. I was a young woman with all the feelings of youth, and my sense rebelled against the unmerited indignities to which I was subjected.

Another dangerous spy existed in my own household, but I shall not sully these pages by mentioning his name, for he is only worthy to be termed a noxious reptile. He belongs to a class only to be met with in palaces—a class responsible for many unfathomed tragedies which are never allowed to see the light. To me, the hold that these creatures obtain is incompre-

hensible; they usually commence their career by being admitted into a curious kind of semi-familiarity with royalties when they are quite young, and they grow up intimately acquainted with the labyrinth of intrigue which always exists in palace life. They end by making themselves indispensable; they force confidences, and thus obtain a hold over their unfortunate masters and mistresses, who are powerless from the moment they betray themselves.

These people are looked upon as the secret keys which unlock the private lives of kings and queens; they are corrupt in every way, and their indolent lives and "high living" render them gross and material. Gratitude and loyalty are unknown when once they are baulked in their desires and intrigues, and woe betide those luckless enough to cross them.

I regarded the man I have mentioned with a peculiar kind of nervous antipathy; he was one of my husband's personal attendants, and was allowed unwarrantable liberties of speech and action. He once dared to address me in a detestably familiar manner, and when he realised how bitterly I resented it, he watched me as a spy, and I felt that his covert looks and furtive glances were always upon me. His "atmosphere" was of the most evil kind, and whenever he left my presence, I felt a strong impulse to throw open

all the windows, and let in the fresh air to purify the room. I have never experienced such a deadly antipathy for any one but this spy of Von Metzsch, and I often thought it a pity that the Court of Saxony, always so mediæval in its ways, did not adopt some sharp, short mediæval method of silencing such traitors.

It may be that a man can persecute a woman with relentless hatred and remain unpunished, but I am old-fashioned enough in my beliefs to think that George Von Metzsch will one day receive his just sentence at that tribunal from which there will be no appeal.

CHAPTER XIV

I LEAVE DRESDEN

My position became almost unendurable after the death of King Albert who had always shown me considerable kindness, and the year 1902 was a most unhappy one for me. My father-in-law felt his health declining, and he apparently determined to get rid of me by fair means or foul before he died. He was terribly afraid lest I should become Queen of Saxony, and as his health became worse, he grew more and more austere and fanatical.

I was practically friendless, and how I longed for some one in whom I could confide! My husband was invariably kind, but when I endeavoured to tell him my troubles, and explain how things really were, he could not, or would not, realise that such wickedness existed.

To all my entreaties that he would test the truth of my statements, he only answered, "But . . . why . . . what reason can there be for such a state of things? I don't notice anything different; why do you worry?"

It was like beating my head against a wall, so little did I impress Frederick-August, and at last I gave it up in despair.

I always knew that I was watched, even in my own rooms, and I felt on the verge of a *crise de nerfs*. My maid told me that she was certain I was being spied upon at night, and I determined to find this out for myself.

One night I got up, and crept silently through the rooms in the dark; the shutters were not closed, and the street lamps gave enough light for me to distinguish the various objects in the room. As I entered, I saw the heavy curtains move slightly, but I pretended not to notice it, and after a few moments I returned to my bedroom and then went to rouse my maid. We made our way to the room occupied by the SPY whom I have previously mentioned. My maid called him by name, but there was no answer. When she opened the door we saw that his bed was empty, and what had hitherto been a suspicion, now became a reality.

Another time, when I was dressing for a Court ball, my toilette table was in such a position that from where I was sitting I could see the door of my dressing-room reflected in the mirror. While the maid was adjusting my coronet, I noticed the velvet portière lifted by a cautious hand, and I

managed to warn her by a glance that something was happening. We continued talking, but, at a sign from me, she darted across the room and confronted a footman who was hidden behind the portière.

"What are you doing *here?*" she inquired, but the man made some futile excuse, and beat a rapid retreat. After these events I felt much relieved to think that, as my husband and I occupied the same bedroom, there could be at least no espionage there.

It was with mixed feelings of joy and apprehension that I found I had again hopes of becoming a mother. Under happier circumstances I should have welcomed another sweet baby, but I felt such a strong presentiment of trouble that I dreaded the effect my nervous condition might have on the unborn child. Those lonely days were only lightened by the society of my sons, who were now old enough to have a tutor, and I often went to see how their studies were progressing, and chatted with their instructor, M. Giron, who was an intelligent and charming man.

I wrote long letters to my brother, the Archduke Leopold, telling him how much I had to endure, and his replies always consoled and supported me. I had by this time fully made up my mind to leave Saxony, and I proposed to

THE SCHOOLROOM AT THE ROYAL PALACE, DRESDEN

Leopold that we should make our home together in Switzerland until King George died, when I could return as Queen.

My lady of the bedchamber, Frau von Fritsch, was one of my most unrelenting enemies. This lady owed her position in my household to her friendship with my father-in-law in the days of his youth when he was a disciple of Plato, whose doctrines tempered his inclinations and enabled him to be purely dispassionate in his dealings with the opposite sex.

Frau von Fritsch appreciated King George's friendship to such a degree that she considered herself one of the Royal Family. She always dressed exactly as I did, and carried her imitation in this direction to a ridiculous extent. I remember that one day when "Erni" met her on the staircase he really thought he saw his mamma, until closer inspection showed him his mistake.

The child was much puzzled and said gravely, "You look like a very old picture of mamma," and Frau von Fritsch was so dense that she did not see that Erni was only referring to her as a work of art, and she repeated this joke against herself to every one she met.

She was intensely affected, but her affectation and deference scarcely disguised her veiled insolence, and she was false to the heart's core.

She discussed me with my father-in-law, and never to my advantage, for she was an utterly unscrupulous liar.

Matters came to a crisis in November 1902. One morning Frau von Fritsch came into my sitting-room, and to my intense amazement she dared to comment on my friendly interest in my sons' tutor. I hope I am always open to reasonable advice, but that such a woman should presume on her friendship with my father-in-law to criticise me was past endurance, and I insisted that she should repeat her accusation of my having flirted with M. Giron to my husband.

Frau von Fritsch cried and sobbed, and begged me not to confront her with Frederick-August. She then went off to my father-in-law, and I sought my husband, and in a paroxysm of despairing tears begged him to take me away from Saxony. He was then suffering from the effects of a broken leg, and my state of mind came upon him with something of a shock.

"Let us go to Egypt," I urged. "If I am safe with you I shall be at rest. You alone can save me. I beg, I entreat you to protect me from those who are trying to ruin me." But all in vain. My husband merely said that I was over-imaginative and hysterical as a result of

my condition, and that it was quite impossible for him to leave Dresden on account of his father's health. If I really wished it we could travel later.

"Later," I sobbed, "may be *too late*, Frederick."

Oh, if my husband had only been less of a good man! In his eyes a woman and a mother was so sacred that he could not conceive any one calumniating her, and the traditions of his house made him think it impossible that people would ever dare to *hint* evil of the Crown Princess of Saxony.

I could have told him that evil was actually made out of my charities and my visits to the hospitals. The Children's Hospital at Dresden was under my patronage, and I used often to go there and assist in the nursing, and occasionally help with the "dressings." One evening a poor girl would not have her bandages adjusted unless I was there, and so, in despair, the house-surgeon telephoned to me, and begged me to humour the sufferer, who was dangerously ill. We were all at tea when the message arrived and I at once wished to go, but my father-in-law absolutely forbade it, and said in a contemptuous, jeering way, "Let the rat die."

I resented this cruelty to a dying girl even

more than anything he had ever done to me, because I felt that I was only doing my duty in going to any of my people who needed me, or my help, in sickness or trouble. I hope the poor child understood before she died how much I wanted to be with her, and how often she was in my thoughts that evening.

After her accusation Frau von Fritsch sent privately for M. Giron and tried to entrap him into an admission of affection for me. He was furious and demanded to face his calumniators. Nothing would induce him to remain at the Court, and he told my husband that urgent family business recalled him to Brussels.

Frau von Fritsch at once went to my father-in-law, and begged him to prevent M. Giron leaving Dresden, for no other reason, I think, than that his departure would effectually crush all hopes of my downfall. Naturally the King was disturbed at the turn of events, and he asked me to try and induce the tutor to reconsider his decision; but M. Giron was obdurate, and left Dresden early in November 1902.

What penances my father-in-law performed to quiet his uneasy conscience I know not, but doubtless the souls in Purgatory had many extra Masses said for them, and as the Court priests received five marks for each Mass I imagine

they were not deeply disturbed at our family differences.

When the King fully realised that for the time being his plans had miscarried, he sent for me, and in tones of cold hatred disclosed the arrangements he contemplated making on my behalf, and I think at this interview religion must have fled weeping from his presence.

We faced each other, outwardly calm, and he said, coming straight to the point, "It has become annoying and wearisome for me to possess you as a daughter-in-law, Louisa. The views you entertain, and the contempt you display for the traditions of our Court convince me that you are not in the way of fulfilling my ideal of what a Queen of Saxony should be. I dislike you personally, I have always done so, and . . . therefore I intend to have you *removed*. I only regret that our ridiculous modern ideas do not permit me to imprison you for life, or better still," he continued, "to cause you to disappear so completely that your fate would never be known. You have now fulfilled your destiny, which was to provide princes to continue our line, and so I have no further use for you. But, Louisa, I now tell you what I have always thought, and that is that you are mad—and that the Bourbon-Habsburg eccentricities have so developed in

you that they have become the cause of your state of mind.

"So, my poor Louisa, as there is happily every provision made nowadays for the insane, I shall personally interest myself in seeing that you are guarded from the consequences of your actions."

He left me without another word, and Frau von Fritsch, who had doubtless been an interested listener to the conversation, came into the boudoir in a state of excitement, and at once began to glorify my father-in-law.

"He is so just, so good, and so considerate for your welfare," she said, "he wishes to keep your husband in ignorance of many sad truths concerning you." Then in motherly tones she continued: "My sweet Princess, I feel so deeply for you. Fancy, if your hysterical condition should become violent, and you attacked your little ones. How terrible that would be! It will be better for you not to see the children, and from this time forth my orders are never to leave you alone with them."

I was so stunned with horror and fright at being told I was insane, that at first I could not speak; but at last I collected all my energies and turned on my enemy.

"Be silent, woman!" I cried. "Don't dare to stay in my presence. Traitress and spy,

MY FATHER-IN-LAW, THE LATE KING GEORGE
OF SAXONY

if you have discussed me with truth, there is nothing in my life to be ashamed of. Go to the King and talk about Plato—you and he will find it reminiscent—but leave me this instant, or I will have you turned out of my boudoir."

At this Frau von Fritsch completely lost her self-control and hissed at me: "Ah—you talk bravely, Imperial Highness, but let me tell you that your accouchement will take place in the Asylum of Sonnenstein; your father-in-law and I have arranged all the details, and your rooms are even now prepared for you."

Left alone, I tried to calm myself in order to look at my desperate situation in all its aspects, and I am sure that few human beings have ever been placed in such a terrible predicament. As I had anticipated, M. Giron's sudden departure had forced the King's hand; it had evidently been intended all along to brand me either as an unfaithful wife or as a lunatic; the first plan had failed, as there was not the faintest proof that any *liaison* existed between M. Giron and myself; so the other expedient was resorted to by my enemies.

I realised with impotent despair how helpless I should be when once I was placed in a Maison de Santé, and I shudderingly recalled to my mind

the various princesses who had been consigned to what I considered a living tomb. The one terror of my existence has always been the dread of insanity, and the horrors of confinement in a madhouse, be it known as a Home of Rest, a Castle, or a Private Sanatorium. Any forced restraint has always been resented by the Habsburgs, and my whole spirit revolted against the fate in store for me. What *could* I do? Various ideas formed and reformed, and eventually crystallised themselves into the one word —*Escape.* I knew that my hours of personal liberty were numbered at Dresden, and that any appeal to my husband would be worse than useless. There was nothing for me but flight, but even as I thought of the idea, I suffered agonies at the prospect of leaving my children —those precious beings who belonged to me. I pictured dear George and Erni, and my loving Tia, left without "mamma," who loved them so tenderly, and I wept over my little girls, who, luckily, were too young to miss me for long.

I have been described as a frivolous woman and a heartless mother, who left her children in a most cruel manner ; but as I am now giving the whole truth to the world, I leave the world to judge who was the more cruel—a hunted, persecuted woman who fought for her liberty,

or the unscrupulous enemies who drove her from husband, home, and children? I knew that the children would be well cared for, and I thought that arrangements could easily be made, after an interval, which would enable me to see them at Salzburg, or some other place within easy reach of Dresden.

Flight, alone, was full of anxiety for me. I knew little or nothing of the outside world, and the unknown is always dreaded. I was in a delicate state of health, when all excitement was undesirable, and my physical condition made me feel both bodily and mentally ill. When I thought of this, a sudden panic seized me. My baby must never, never be born in a madhouse; it must be spared at all costs from such dreadful prenatal influences, and I think this last horror finally decided me not to lose another moment over my plans for safeguarding my unborn child and myself.

I behaved that evening just as if nothing unpleasant had happened, and I said casually that, as I was rather run down, I should like to spend a few days at Salzburg. To my surprise no objection was raised, so I at once wrote to my parents saying that I proposed paying them a short visit, and I managed to send Leopold a long confidential account of all that had transpired. I told him that I relied on his promise

to help me, should papa refuse to have me at Salzburg, until things could be arranged; and from the moment I knew I was really going home, I lived in a kind of waking dream. I found myself taking an odd interest in quite trivial things in my rooms. "Look well at us," the pictures seemed to say, "because you may never see us again." The famous emeralds gleamed with unwonted fire, and seemed to whisper, "We shall adorn another Princess in years to come, but we shall remember you." When I stole into the bedrooms to look at my sleeping children an unseen presence seemed to follow me, and say, "Cherish the memory of these little ones, unhappy mother, and you will have the consolation of being told in days to come that you have lived in their hearts."

That night, as I lay awake, torn with anguish, I heard my husband's peaceful breathing, and I knew that he slept in ignorance of what the morrow would bring. I was often tempted to throw myself again on his protection, but I was too much in dread of my father-in-law to dare to speak.

When I drove to the railway station on the day I left Dresden, I had something of the feeling of an emigrant who is leaving his native land; but an emigrant is not always

obliged to leave his nearest and dearest behind. As I stepped into my *coupé*, and the train steamed out of the station, I realised that my day as Crown Princess of Saxony was over.

CHAPTER XV

My arrival at Salzburg : A fruitless interview : My brother protects me : We agree to fly together : A night adventure : We start for Switzerland

I ARRIVED at Salzburg on December 10, 1902. I had passed through a whirl of conflicting emotions during the journey, the prevalent one being a feeling of intense relief at my escape from my father-in-law. The danger of being immured in a madhouse seemed now averted, but I was uncertain as to the attitude my parents would adopt. It is a strange fact that, on the various occasions when I have relied on other people, they have not only failed me, but have frustrated my plans, and I have always had to face the great crises of my life entirely alone.

I entered the gloomy Palace at Salzburg with high hopes, for I felt certain that papa and mamma would pity and console me in my troubles, although they might possibly disapprove of my plans for the future. I was convinced that papa, especially, would be horrified at the idea of my detention in a Maison de Santé, and

would never for a moment countenance it. I longed for comforting words and some demonstrations of affection to heal my wounded heart, and give me fresh courage for the trials still in store for me. But I was doomed to disappointment. Mamma received me coldly, and evidently thought it very odd that I wished to visit Salzburg in mid-winter; she said that I must be careful on no account to excite my father, for he was in a precarious state of health.

I have often wondered how mamma came to have a daughter such as I am, for our temperaments are entirely dissimilar. She has been a good mother according to her lights, but I am sure she must have regarded us girls as rather troublesome, for she was always worrying about our chances of marriage, and it has been a bitter disappointment to her that she has only contrived to "get off" myself and my sister Anne, who became the wife of Prince John of Hohenlohe-Bartenstein-und-Jagtsberg, in 1901. I am told that ever since my divorce mamma has put all the blame on me for the fact that my sisters still remain spinsters, and maintains that my "impossible" conduct makes probable suitors chary of marrying into our family. I think it is a great pity that they do *not* marry, for they are sweet, amiable creatures, who, luckily for themselves, do not possess those Habsburg eccentricities which Leopold and I have inherited.

I lost no time in obtaining an interview with papa, and, though I was shocked at the change in his appearance, I felt that I must tell him everything. I fancy mamma must have prepared him for a hysterical outburst, for at first he treated me like a wayward child who required humouring and soothing. When he saw that I was in deadly earnest, however, he listened more attentively to my story, and I could see he was impressed by it.

I began by telling him how, at the funeral of King Albert, the Chamberlain had struck the first note of warning when he said to me: "For the love of Heaven, Imperial Highness, be careful in all your words and actions, for there is a plot against you. I dare not tell you more."

I related all my intolerable persecution, the indignities to which I had been subjected by Von Metzsch and his spies, and the bitter hatred of my father-in-law. Papa asked me whether I had complained to Frederick-August, and on my replying in the affirmative, he wished to know what my husband thought. What answer could I make except to tell the disconcerting truth that my husband only looked upon my ideas of tyranny and persecution as creations of my imagination and an unfortunate tendency to take offence where none was intended.

To my utter and undisguised dismay, papa, of

all people, seemed to share Frederick-August's opinion. He said that he, too, was convinced that my state of mind arose from nervous depression consequent on my condition, and advised me to be patient and return to Dresden. He even went so far as to say that I had probably mistaken my father-in-law's attitude, that he could only have been actuated by the kindest motives when he suggested I should leave the palace, and that instead of a madhouse, he only meant a "rest-cure."

"But, Papa," I stammered, "*Sonnenstein* was mentioned, and all the world knows that *Sonnenstein* is a lunatic asylum."

"Nothing you can say," said papa firmly, "will ever convince me that the Royal Family of Saxony could be guilty of such a dastardly act as to intrigue against you, for besides being Crown Princess you are my daughter, and a member of the Imperial House of Austria." I argued that with some natures hatred knows no laws and acknowledges no rank, and I instanced the animosity displayed by Bismarck to the late Empress Frederick to prove that similar cases had existed at other Courts; but papa declined to listen, and told me again that, once and for all, I had better make up my mind to return to Dresden.

"Am I then definitely to understand, papa,"

I said in despair, "that you refuse to believe my story? I assure you I have not exaggerated a single detail, but rather, out of my love for you, have minimised my sufferings. Papa, dearest, you have always been my best friend; the affection between us is deep and devoted; I implore you to let it plead my cause. What will become of me if you desert me? You will surely not grudge your unhappy child one tiny corner of this enormous palace where she can take shelter from her enemies. Oh, do listen, don't turn from me; if I stay here I shall give you no more trouble, and if I am patient the situation at Dresden may change as soon as my husband knows I will not return to him, and my enemies become aware that I am under the protection of the Emperor of Austria and yourself."

I clasped my hands as I uttered this beseeching appeal. Papa was visibly affected, but he was obdurate, and it seemed to me as if he were repeating a well-instilled lesson when he said, somewhat testily:

"Oh, dear, how importunate you are, Louisa! I am very sorry for you, my child, if you are unhappy; but it is wrong to interfere between husband and wife, and I do not propose to interfere between you and Frederick-August. You may be sure that if he says there is nothing

to alarm you, he is right, and you had better dismiss all these morbid fancies and unjust suspicions from your mind."

That absolutely silenced me, and I hastily sought my brother Leopold, who was waiting to hear what papa had decided. When I told him he shrugged his shoulders, and commented somewhat strongly on our father's obstinacy.

"Papa is afraid of offending Francis-Joseph," remarked Leopold. "For my own part I cannot see why we Habsburgs are always so frightened of him; after all he is a very ordinary old man."

"Leopold," I said, "my state is, indeed, desperate. You are my last hope, don't give me up to my enemies."

"Give you up! *certainly not*," cried the good fellow. "I won't see my sister tyrannised over by a set of pettifogging priests, and a Jesuitical old King and his creatures; I'm sure you are quite right in all that you say, and I think Frederick-August hasn't the courage of a mouse. I should like to see any one try to persecute *my* wife."

"What *shall* we do?" I queried, because I felt certain that now my motive for coming to Salzburg was known, mamma would write whole reams about it to Dresden, and I was honestly frightened at the thought of what might follow her disclosures.

"What shall we do? Why, Louisa, we'll run away to-morrow evening. I'll make all the arrangements for our journey, and I think our destination had better be Switzerland," said my easy-going brother.

I thought of the old saying, that any port is welcome in a storm; and, though I had never anticipated leaving Salzburg so precipitately, I felt that instant flight was the only thing possible for me. I made one more appeal at the eleventh hour to papa, but as it met with no satisfactory response, I saw that the die was cast, and that Leopold and I must throw in our lots together.

The hours of that eventful evening dragged on with leaden feet. Leopold was to come and fetch me at half-past twelve, and I retired to bed early in order to disarm the suspicions of my maid, who slept in the next room to mine. Directly I thought she was asleep, I got out of bed and dressed very quietly, hardly daring to move. As the weather was bitterly cold I put on a thick black serge gown, with an astrachan muff and boa, and a felt hat swathed with a heavy crêpe veil completed my costume. I collected all my jewels, three changes of underlinen, some stockings and handkerchiefs, with a few toilet necessaries, and packed them in a small valise. I had hardly

finished my simple preparations before Leopold came to the door, which I opened softly, and we crept in our stockinged feet along the icy salon.

The distance to my brother's apartments seemed interminable; we passed cautiously through the State rooms, and down the haunted picture gallery, where, by the moon's rays I could see the portraits of my Habsburg ancestors looking down at their fugitive descendants. The faces seemed, in my overwrought state, to wear a look of cynical amusement; indeed, so lifelike did they appear, that I should not have been in the least surprised to have seen some of them step out of their frames and speak to us.

At last we reached Leopold's room, and then we crept down the staircase, hardly daring to breathe, and starting at the night noises which are so peculiar to ancient buildings, when joints crack, and boards complain, and strange insects tick and crawl behind the panelling. Leopold unlocked a door at the foot of the staircase and we found ourselves outside in the great square of Salzburg. It was very still, and the bright moonlight flooded the snow which covered the ground; the cold was intense, sixteen degrees below zero, and everything looked unreal and unearthly.

As I gazed up at the shuttered windows of the sleeping palace, I thought with a pang, that I was making another farewell, and taking another step towards the unknown. Ferdinand of Bulgaria's half-jesting remark about the nice little plants grown at Salzburg, flashed across my mind, and I thought, with sad irony, that one plant at least had had a painful uprooting. It did not flourish where it was transplanted, and when it wished once again to take root in the old garden, there was no room for it.

A closed carriage with swift horses was waiting for us, and we drove off at full speed to a way-side station three hours' distance from Salzburg; there we caught the Vienna express to Zurich, and another turn in fortune's wheel was accomplished.

CHAPTER XVI

I arrive at Zurich : My future sister-in-law : A rude awakening : My terrible position : The only way : M. Giron joins me : A wild-goose chase : The secret police : Their fruitless journey : Legal proceedings commence

We reached Zurich the same evening at five o'clock, and it was not until I found myself actually in Switzerland that I felt safe from pursuit and capture. My brother, however, was kindness itself, and tried to make me look on the bright side of things; directly we arrived at Zurich he wired to my father that we had gone to Switzerland, and intended to remain there.

I seemed to exist in a kind of waking dream; I had now indeed crossed the Rubicon, and I realised that I had burnt a good many of my boats. When the ordinary woman flees from the conventions, she is after all only going further into a world with which she is already acquainted; I was in the position of an explorer, and I endured many of the sufferings which invariably fall to the lot of the pioneer.

When I found myself on the platform at Zurich I grasped the fact that I was only a unit in the hurry and bustle around me. I thought of the ceremony which usually attends the arrival of royalty at a railway station; but for me there was no reception, no red carpet, and no friends or relatives to meet me. No one was aware that the black-robed unhappy looking woman and the handsome young man who accompanied her were the Crown Princess of Saxony and her brother the Archduke Leopold.

We drove at once to the hotel, and, utterly wearied in body and mind, I threw myself on the bed, and sobbed bitterly. Here again, everything was strange to me. I missed my creature comforts, for I had no maid to arrange my things, no satin dressing-gown to slip on, no crystal-and-silver bottles full of fragrant essences to relieve my throbbing head, nothing of my own except what was contained in the unimportant looking valise which had been placed in a corner of the room.

I contrasted the hotel bedroom with my own room at Dresden, which was replete with every comfort dear to the heart of a delicately nurtured woman, and, as the *material* side of things presented itself, a wave of hatred swept over me, and for the first time since my marriage I disliked my husband. It was, perhaps, only the con-

dition which occasionally manifests itself during pregnancy, when the mother is seized with an inexplicable antipathy to the father of her child; but apart from this there was an undercurrent of angry revolt at Frederick-August's weakness and lack of perception of my troubles, and these unhappy feelings were doubtless intensified by my strange surroundings.

I do not know how long I continued to indulge in this painful retrospection, but I must have dozed off at last, for I was aroused by the opening of my door. The electric lights were switched on, and when I raised myself to see who the intruder was, I encountered the gaze of a pair of Madonna-like eyes in a beautiful face framed with masses of magnificent Titian-red hair. The newcomer was obviously not of my world, but I was not left long in doubt of her identity, for she introduced herself to me as my brother Leopold's future wife.

I was taken aback. I had not expected this, and I did not want it. I knew, indeed, that Leopold had fallen in love with a beautiful girl of the people, but it never crossed my mind that he intended to marry her, and I felt instinctively that her arrival in our midst would upset all my plans.

I tried, however, to disguise my annoyance, and to put some warmth into my greeting, but

she was quite impossible, and I subsequently discovered that she had not even been trained in the rudiments of the art of behaving at table.

Fortunately, there was not the faintest suspicion of our identity, and after the unsophisticated young woman had gone to bed, Leopold and I sat up all night discussing our plans, with the result that I received another shock. I had had the most absolute conviction until that moment that Leopold would make his home with me in Switzerland until the death of my father-in-law would make my return to Saxony possible; and he had never given me the slightest hint that he had other views. Imagine my surprise when he told me, after much hesitation, that it would be quite impossible for us to carry out our original idea, as he intended to marry almost at once, and that this step would, of course, involve him in endless business matters.

"I firmly believe, Louisa," he said, "that though you are safe for the moment, it is only *for* the moment, and that you will be eventually forced to return to Dresden. You idolise your children to such an extent that they will be employed as the lure to get you back, and once back, you will (especially after this escapade) be consigned to a madhouse."

On hearing these terribly candid words I

quite broke down, and I think my abject distress touched my brother's heart. He assured me that he had no intention of leaving me then and there, and that he would continue to protect me and my interests. I did not reproach him with his broken promises; I felt too stunned, and said wearily that I must take an hour's rest, and endeavour to face the new aspect of the situation with all the calmness and fortitude I could muster.

I fully appreciated the fact that I had no home, and no friends with whom I could take shelter, even if they dared offer it. I stood alone, buffeted by the waves of intrigue, and I realised that I, a totally inexperienced woman, would now be forced to fight my enemies *à outrance.*

The winter dawn was just breaking when I returned to my room, and as I wondered whether it would be the precursor of many hopeless days, despair overcame me, and I had an impulse to put an end to my troubles by self-destruction, but the next instant I thought of my unborn child, and the dreadful feeling passed. The flood-gates of my tears were opened, and the icy bands round my spirit thawed as I wept, remembering that after all I had still something to live for. In five months I should be no longer alone, little hands would clasp mine,

innocent eyes would meet my loving gaze, and I should also have a confidant who, being unable to talk, would be incapable of betraying my secrets. This quieter mood came as a blessing, enabling me to get a little sleep which I sorely needed, but when I awoke my fears were redoubled.

Leopold's *fiancée* was so gauche and exasperating that she aggravated my nervous condition tenfold. I think the poor thing really meant well, but when she treated me as a princess her behaviour was laughable, and when she treated me as an equal, she was still more ridiculous. Leopold, always excitable, was now more so than ever; he kept on telling me that my doom was sealed in Dresden, and he pictured the horrors of my fate.

In fact, everything conspired to upset my mental balance, and there can be no doubt that I entirely lost my sense of proportion, and worked myself up into a needless state of terror. The ever-recurrent idea of the Maison de Santé became a perfect obsession and upset my usual calmness of mind.

At last, after much fruitless cogitation, I took a desperate resolve, and one fraught with disastrous consequences. I decided that the only way out of the *impasse* in which I found myself, was to take some action which would effectually prevent my

returning to Dresden, even as the victim of my triumphant enemies. What could I do? Defiance would not serve my purpose, any appeal to my husband would be overruled, and I shrank from the thought of appealing to the public. What else remained? Suddenly the solution flashed through my mind, I seemed to hear the words "Compromise yourself"; and to the voice which whispered within me I answered, "With whom?"

I knew well that I had been accused of having secret love-affairs, and I had been contemptuously amused when I heard the scandalous gossip, for, as I never went anywhere without a lady-in-waiting, and always occupied the same room as my husband, such ridiculous lies seemed beneath refutation. But now I thought of the one person who had already suffered through his friendship with me, and who had sworn, in an impulsive fashion, to dedicate himself to my service, no matter when and how I required it. This was M. Giron, who at the moment represented my only hope of safety from my father-in-law, and the horrors of a Maison de Santé.

I considered this daring expedient all day, and asked Leopold his opinion about it. He did not discourage me, partly because the unusual always appealed to him, but mainly because

his one wish was to be free to live his life with the woman of his choice, unencumbered by any family tie in the shape of a runaway sister.

Let the world judge what must have been the state of my mind, when my terror of my enemies was so great that it impelled me to sacrifice my reputation in order to escape from them. The Habsburgs have always been accounted light livers and light lovers, but I had never had any inclination to emulate my forbears; I certainly was in love with love because it represented to me much that was beautiful and happy, but I had never dreamed hitherto of betraying my husband, or forfeiting the respect of my children.

I was perfectly aware that once the step was taken it could not be retraced; I saw myself as the centre of scandal, pointed at as an unfaithful wife and a heartless mother. I fancied I could hear the coarse, indecent gossip that would inevitably circulate, and I felt myself already enrolled in the ranks of that vast army of women who have been sacrificed at the altar of their affections.

The ordinary woman has only to face the condemnation of her own circle when she outrages the proprieties. I was in a far worse predicament, for I am related to many of the royal

families of Europe, and I had to reckon with the Emperor Francis-Joseph, who, as the head of the Habsburgs, sits like Olympian Jove, hurling the thunderbolts of banishment and loss of rank and dignities at the rebellious and wayward members of his house. There was also the glaring publicity that would inevitably be given to my conduct by every newspaper in the world.

Apart from the fall which I knew I must suffer, I was full of grief at the idea of causing my father any pain, and, as this troubled me deeply, I resolved to make one last appeal to my parents. I therefore telegraphed to them, begging to be allowed to return home. I awaited the reply with indescribable anxiety, and at last it came. With trembling fingers I opened the telegram, and read the words which sealed my fate :

"Nous avons d'autres enfants, nous ne pouvons pas nous occuper de *Toi*."

I saw nothing left for me but to summon M. Giron, and he lost no time in hurrying to Zurich. He was at first most unwilling to let me make the sacrifice I proposed, but I reminded him of his promises, and held him to his word. Looking back with matured, sober judgment I can see that I was entirely misguided in my method of defying fate; but

my explanation must be that my mind was then unfitted to judge of the real seriousness of my act. We Habsburgs never meet the right person at the right time to save us from ourselves, although in truth I must say that we are the most difficult mortals to influence when once we have decided on pursuing our own course.

A conclave between Leopold, M. Giron, and myself resulted in our deciding to leave Zurich for Geneva without loss of time. We drew up a telegram to Herr von Tümpling, the chamberlain at Dresden, in which I said that I had decided never to return to Dresden. The form was posted to a friend of M. Giron's at Brussels, and despatched from there to throw the Court off the scent, and to enable us to cover up our tracks.

My telegram produced a feeling of utter consternation at the palace, although the people were kept in ignorance that anything unusual had occurred. Bulletins from Salzburg were issued to the effect that I was confined to my room with a severe cold, and the Dresden newspapers copied these reports. Everything was done to prevent a scandal, and Frau von Fritsch and Herr von Tümpling, accompanied by a perfect retinue of footmen, maids, and luggage, set out at frantic speed for Brussels in

the vain hope of discovering my whereabouts. The secret police searched every hotel, but to no purpose, and at last the much chagrined Royal retinue had to return to Dresden. A five days' search then took place all over Germany, and when Switzerland was finally discovered to be my place of concealment, the services of the German secret police were enlisted in order to effect my arrest. Their predicament when they reached Geneva was something like that of the soldiers in the unfortunate Helder expedition, when:

> The mighty Duke of York
> He had ten thousand men:
> He marched them up to the top of the hill
> And he marched them down again.
> And when they were up, they were up,
> And when they were down, they were down,
> And when they were only half-way up,
> They were neither up nor down.

The secret police of Berlin have a stupendous notion of their own importance, and this makes them perfectly oblivious of the laws of any other country except Germany, and I have no doubt they believe they could arrest the Pope himself merely by demanding admittance to the Vatican in the name of William II.

When the officers arrived at Geneva they were, according to their own idea, absolute

masters of the situation. They were greatly perturbed, however, when they alighted from the train to encounter the Swiss Police, who explained (waiving any question of an official introduction) that they must at once return to Berlin, as no one, be it prince or peasant, can be arrested by foreign police in Geneva. The emissaries were therefore forced to beat a somewhat undignified retreat, much to their annoyance and disgust.

M. Adrien Lachenal acted as my lawyer at Geneva. He is a most charming and highly intelligent man who did his utmost on my behalf. I also employed a lawyer from Leipzig, Dr. Zehme, and another lawyer represented me at Dresden. Everything was in perfect chaos, but I steadfastly set my face against the idea of a divorce, and only urged the necessity for a separation; all I said was misrepresented to my husband, and I saw that my enemies were resolved to move Heaven and earth to prevent a *rapprochement*.

CHAPTER XVII

Après moi le Déluge : The people's sympathy : The stone-throwers : Blind justice : Money *versus* honour : The letter that never reached me : I enter La Maiterie : Bolts and Bars : A plague of nurses : Cold food but comforting chocolate : A spirit in prison : I look far back : My awakening

When the people of Saxony knew that I had actually left Dresden, their excitement and anger were such as to baffle description, and everything possible had to be done by the authorities to restore quiet. My flight was attributed to the treatment I had experienced from my father-in-law and the priests; and members of the Royal Family were obliged to keep indoors, so great was the outcry against them.

A black cat was killed, and its skin, after being turned inside out, was hung at the entrance of the King's Palace, and above it was nailed a card bearing these words:

"Be careful; this will be *your* fate
at our hands."

Mathilde was afraid to walk out; and even

poor King Albert's place of burial was seized by the mob.

Another placard, fixed outside the church, intimated that the people regretted their beloved King was no more, and hinted that my father-in-law would not be missed by his subjects were he within the tomb instead.

The "manifesto" ended with the words: "The old King stirs in his coffin with indignation at the fate of his Louisa."

Thousands of persons marched to the palace to demand an explanation of my flight, but the outer gates were closed; at last there was fighting in the streets, as the crowd tried to force an entrance, and was opposed by the police and the troops. For some time passions ran high, and above the tumult the insistent cry of "Bring us back our Louisa," must have reached the ears of my enemies within the gates, and driven home to them the truth that I was not without friends in Saxony.

Frau von Fritsch was stoned when she showed herself in the streets; a novel experience for her, no doubt, for, although she was an adept stone-thrower herself, I am sure this was the first time in her life that she had ever been the recipient of tangible missiles.

George von Metzsch was warned by anonymous letters to keep out of sight, for if he fell into the

hands of the mob he would be at once "torn to pieces." The situation became so menacing that it was absolutely necessary for legal steps to be taken against me as soon as possible.

It is universally known that divorce is not recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, and as no Austrian Archduchess is ever married civilly, it was somewhat difficult for my father-in-law and his advisers to find a way out of the *impasse*. Divorce proceedings were eventually based on the document signed by my father and the Emperor of Austria ; and that, and the Deed of Renunciation, were the only written evidences of a marriage-contract. A special case was, therefore, arranged on those lines, and a divorce was pronounced without the sanction of my father or the Emperor. The clauses were modelled on those of ordinary divorce petitions, which could not, of course, apply to members of the Imperial House of Austria, who are not under the jurisdiction of any court.

My father-in-law, always original in his methods, was particularly so in the matter of my divorce, calling together a special tribunal of his own, regardless of the illegalities involved.

This throws an interesting light on the mediæval methods prevalent in Saxony, for in no other civilised country would it be possible to convene such a tribunal. The King proposed

to enact the rôle of Lord Chief Justice, and appointed twelve judges under him, but at the last moment his courage failed. Perhaps he was confronted by visions of disapproving saints, and he therefore summoned the faithful von Metzsch, and told him that he must do all the unsavoury work because, as a fervent Catholic, my father-in-law was greatly perturbed at the idea of a divorce, and was also apprehensive as to the attitude of the Vatican.

This extraordinary court of justice was an absolute farce. Quantities of forged letters were produced purporting to have been written by me, but even the limited intelligence of the judges convened failed to see how I could possibly have penned all the letters attributed to me, for, had I done so, I should have had to write for years from morning to night without a moment to eat, sleep, or dress. The saddest and most disgraceful part of the whole thing was the bribery which was resorted to in order to obtain possession of some of my correspondence so as to forge letters full of my intimate "tournure de phrases" and the most striking peculiarities of my caligraphy. Unfortunately, money triumphed over honour, and my enemies were able to secure a great many private letters written to certain persons whom I had trusted and befriended.

I was desperately unhappy, and, in addition to

my mental misery, I was subjected to a positive persecution from newspaper reporters. I have always refused to be interviewed, and the many so-called interviews with me, alleged to have taken place in Switzerland and elsewhere, were baseless fabrications.

I remember on one occasion being confronted by a reporter who represented an American journal. As I came out of my room he approached me and said, without preamble: "Say, Princess, I've the power to cover this stairway with banknotes for you to walk on if you will just let me have a few words with you. Is it a deal?"

I took no notice of him, but this was only one of many worries; and the constant strain, added to my delicate health, made me feel on the verge of a bad nervous breakdown.

M. Giron did not remain long in Switzerland. My reputation being thoroughly compromised by his presence, my object was achieved, and he therefore returned to Brussels.

In February 1903, I heard that my beloved "Tia" was dangerously ill and, torn with desperate anxiety, I wired to my husband and begged him, as a most unhappy mother, to allow me to see my child. Frederick-August did not reply himself; the cruel answer came from Von Metzsch, and it was *No.* Von Metzsch added

that if I attempted to see "Tia" I should be immediately arrested on the frontier.

That almost broke my spirit. I had never until then believed the world was so hard, and the knowledge of my forlorn and friendless state caused me the most poignant anguish. My thoughts always reverted to my husband, and I constantly wondered of what he was thinking, and how the days passed for him. A thousand times I longed to see him, to be forgiven and sheltered from the indignities which now fell to my lot, and I hoped against hope that Frederick-August would assert himself and save me, even though the eleventh hour had passed. It is only right that I should here defend my husband, whose seeming attitude of indifference to my sufferings has been strongly commented upon. I know now, when it is too late, that he sent Herr von Tümpling expressly to Geneva with a letter in which he urgently begged me to return to him with his complete assurance that all would be well.

His contemptible emissary remained in Geneva for three days, but always evaded my efforts to see him though I wrote and asked for an interview. It seems incredible that such base measures were employed to prevent my husband and myself from ever arriving at an understanding, but I owe it to Frederick-August to tell the world that

MY SECOND SON, PRINCE FREDERICK-CHRISTIAN
OF SAXONY [TIA]

he was willing to forget the past, and it affords me a certain sad pleasure to think that, although his letter never reached me, it was most certainly written.

I was, in addition to my other troubles, greatly perplexed as to ways and means; and I had to face financial worries, an experience I had never hitherto known. I asked for my allowance, but it was refused, and I knew it was worse than useless to appeal for help to Salzburg. My lawyer, M. Lachenal, tried to persuade me that, as I required perfect rest of mind and body, the best thing I could do was to go into a private nursing home until matters could be arranged, and I decided to follow his advice and enter La Maiterie, near Nyon, a few miles from Geneva.

Just before leaving I saw Professor Jentzer, who came for the express purpose of telling me that he had received a letter from the powers at Dresden asking him to certify that I was not *enceinte* when I left Saxony, and offering him a very large sum of money if he complied with this outrageous request. He told me that he had left the letter unanswered, and added: "I would *never* lend myself to such an infamous thing."

M. Lachenal made all the preparations for my departure, and as Leopold also strongly

approved of it, I ended by thinking that it might probably be all for the best.

On the morning of February 6 I left Geneva by train accompanied by Leopold, Dr. Zehme (my Saxon lawyer), and Dr. Jentzer, the head of the Maternity Hospital in Geneva. We reached Nyon, where a carriage awaited us; it was a sullen, depressing day: the skies were overcast, a persistent drizzling rain fell steadily, and, as the carriage was somewhat small, we were packed, a damp, uncomfortable mass of humanity, inside.

La Maiterie is situated near the Lake; it lies in a plain surrounded by park and pasture land, and my first glimpse of it through the steady downpour showed a large house and several small villas. On our arrival I was introduced to the resident physician, Dr. Martin, a charming man, somewhat unkempt and shaggy in appearance, but with a heart of gold. Professor Forel, head of the Asylum for the Insane, was also in attendance; he is, I believe, the greatest brain specialist in Switzerland, and he is also an authority on natural history. Directly I heard his name it seemed strangely familiar to me, and I suddenly recollected that he was always being quoted by Mathilde as the one man in the world who knew all about the antics of ants.

Dr. Martin told me I must sign a paper saying that I wished voluntarily to enter La Maiterie,

and that I agreed to give myself up to the care of himself and his colleague. Something intuitively warned me that it would be as well if I did NOT sign any paper, and I therefore firmly refused to do so; I agreed, however, to allow my lawyer to prepare a document saying that I was willing to stop at the "Home," but only so long as I wished, and not a single day longer. This was accordingly done. A smart nurse in uniform was sent for by Dr. Martin, and after I had said good-bye to Leopold, I was taken to the little villa where my rooms had been prepared.

I was very tired, but my natural curiosity forced me to display some interest in my strange surroundings, and, as I was crossing a corridor, I was startled by a succession of piercing shrieks proceeding from a room opposite. I stopped, half afraid, and turned to the nurse to inquire the cause.

She looked at me in rather an amused way, and then said with complete indifference: "That noise? Oh, that's only a Polish count who has been here for the last thirty-five years!"

Up to now I had believed La Maiterie was a nursing home; *now* I knew, with feelings of indescribable horror, that it was a lunatic asylum.

I thought the shock would have killed me. Here was I in the very place I most dreaded in the world—a Maison de Santé—through fear

of which I had sacrificed my reputation. This last irony of fate was too much for my overwrought nerves and, utterly worn out and crushed, I went into the villa, sank into a chair, unable to speak, and almost fainted from exhaustion. I looked at the windows: they were barred, and a glance into my bedroom showed that there also I was a prisoner. Who, save myself, or any one who has experienced what I did can realise the horror of such surroundings? I yearned for merciful oblivion to come, and for a time obliterate the terror of bolts and bars, but instead of oblivion, every faculty I possessed seemed more keenly alert than ever. I suffered such agonies that the recollection of them, even to-day, makes me shudder again, and thank God for freedom!

I asked the nurse for something to eat, and after an interminable time various enamelled dishes were brought containing chilled, badly cooked, unappetising food, the sight of which nauseated me, and effectually subdued any desire to eat. I was given a common spoon, but no knife or fork, and the simplest comforts of an ordinary meal were lacking. I turned away with repugnance, and a sense of revolt against life seized me, and, like Job, I almost wished to curse God and die, so lonely and heart-broken did I feel. But even as I wept,

little tender lips seemed to kiss away my tears. I imagined I felt soft clinging arms round my neck, and I pictured innocent eyes looking at me with that wisdom of all the ages which is only seen in the eyes of a young child. A voice seemed to whisper, bidding me be consoled, for out of much suffering I should find much joy, and also to take courage for the sake of that little being I should very soon bring into the world.

Comforted and reassured, I dried my tears and proceeded to examine my rooms which, except for the "locked in" feeling that pervaded the whole villa, were quite cosy and tastefully furnished, and if I *was* barred in, the outside world was most effectually barred out—a consoling thought after my hotel experiences.

Dr. Martin suggested that I should have two nurses, but I declined his offer, for there is probably no being so unsympathetic and tactless as the average mental nurse, and I was anxious to keep them at a distance. The more I saw of the nurses during my stay at La Maiterie, the more I detested them; with very few exceptions they were totally unsuited by temperament to look after the poor sufferers under their care. Their one and only idea seemed to be that, as the patients were insane, anything was good enough for them, and it

mattered not how rudely or unkindly they were addressed.

It was the old, old story of the tyranny of the strong, and I was curiously interested to observe how nurses of common origin seem positively to delight in annoying and goading the unfortunate ladies placed in their charge; it proved to me that the hatred of the lower orders for the aristocracy is ineradicable, for ever smouldering, and needing very little to fan it into a flame.

My maid, however, was kindness itself, and every morning at seven o'clock she prepared me a refreshing cup of chocolate, which was the only warm, comforting nourishment I had during the whole day.

The doctors paid me regular visits twice a day, and at odd times whenever they deemed it advisable. At first I was only allowed to walk in the grounds with a nurse, but I could not endure such a trial to my patience and intelligence. I told Dr. Martin that I preferred my maid as a companion, and the kind man permitted me to dispense with the nurse's society.

The inmate of the room next to mine was a lady suffering from acute mania, and I heard endless noises and shrieks which made the long hours hideous. The nights were terrible; apart

from the disturbance near me, my own sad thoughts prevented me from sleeping, and I indulged in retrospective reveries. At times I was a girl with papa, happy and free, inhaling the pure icy mountain air, and tracking the chamois. Again I was at the Hofburg, surrounded by splendour and gaiety; I could see the shimmer of costly fabrics, and the glitter of jewels; I listened to voluptuous music; I was sought after and admired, and I held pride of place as an Archduchess of the House of Habsburg.

Then the scene changed to Dresden. I was again the young bride in love with love and life, the happy mother, the idolised princess; but just as I dwelt with happiness, a piercing shriek dispelled the visions of the past, and I started in renewed agony of mind as I again realised that now I was a lonely woman whose only shelter was a madhouse.

CHAPTER XVIII

I leave La Maiterie : A reconciliation with my parents : Birth of Monica : The chalet at Wartegg : I interview the Socialist leaders : The Red Queen : Death of my father-in-law; his remorse : Hope deferred : The eccentricities of the Habsburgs : The Story of John Orth : "I will return"

I REMAINED at La Maiterie until March 1, 1903, when I wrote to papa telling him how much I had endured and suffered since I left Salzburg, and begging him to relent and show me some kindness. My letter touched him; perhaps he understood at last what I had gone through, and his affection for me overcame his disapproval of the course I had adopted. I was accordingly informed that I could go to Lindau and stay there as long as I liked.

I was deeply touched and grateful for papa's kindness, and lost no time in leaving the Maison de Santé. When I arrived at Lindau I found mamma awaiting me. It was a painful meeting for us, and she only remained a few days, returning later when Monica was born on May 4, 1903. I was dreadfully ill, for inexorable Nature

demanded from me the toll I had levied on my constitution and nervous system. I also endured that bitterness which only the heart knows, and I wondered if, in the days to come, my child would still love me when she heard how much the world had condemned her mother. Poor little princess! There was no father to kiss and fondle her, like the other babies; no beautiful christening robes of lace and no elaborate ceremonial for Monica. There was just the mother who idolised her, but who dreaded the future, for the joy of undisputed possession was clouded with the fear of possible separation.

I stayed at Lindau for six weeks, and then I took my baby to the Château de Ronno è Amplepuis, which I had rented from the Comtesse de St. Victor. It was a tumble-down old house, infested with rats and mice, and after remaining there for five months I went to the Isle of Wight, where I lived until June 1904.

Monica was the sweetest child in the world; beautiful and extraordinarily precocious. She seemed to notice everything that went on, and the dear little soul lavished all her affection on me. Gradually I seemed recalled to life, and with renewed interests came renewed hopes. My temperament was always buoyant, and I imagined that Frederick-August would take some

step which would change everything and restore me to my old position.

In June 1904 the Duke of Parma lent me a châlet in the park at Wartegg, and there both my parents visited me, and I resumed to some extent my affectionate relations with papa, who was philosophic enough to believe in the truth of the words, "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." I was almost happy in those days, and as papa very generously provided me with horses, carriages, and servants, all that I had to pay was household expenses.

I had a very curious experience at Wartegg which offered me an opportunity for revenge of which I did not avail myself.

One day I was told that two men wished to see me on urgent and private business. When I received them they informed me that they were the leaders of the Socialist Party in Saxony, and that their errand might lead to important results if I cared to consider their proposals. I was naturally interested, and begged them to enlighten me.

"Imperial Highness," said the man who appeared to be the chief person in authority, "we have come to ask you to return to Dresden under our protection. We have, I can truthfully assure you, the power to overthrow the existing régime. Our plans were carefully laid long

ago, and the moment is ripe for their execution. Come back with us, avenge yourself on your enemies, and you will become the Red Queen of Saxony, owning the allegiance of the Saxon populace, who have always been faithful and devoted to you. We know the weak points of the Constitution, and we are assured that you, and you alone, really understand the needs of the people. We will give you back your children, and you shall be happy once more. Do not refuse," urged the man, who seemed profoundly moved; "obey the dictates of your heart, and do not suffer any further martyrdom at the hands of Von Metzsch. Return, 'Our Louisa'; thousands of arms are already outstretched in welcome; thousands of voices are ready to acclaim you. Come back and carry out those reforms which we know you have always favoured. Destroy the power of the priests, and cleanse the Court of the plague of parasites and liars who have sought to destroy you."

I was deeply affected, and for one moment I allowed myself to imagine the luxury of revenge; but my better self triumphed, and I said very quietly and decidedly: "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your offer, but I cannot accept it. True, I have suffered unjustly, but if I bought revenge, consider the price I should have

to pay. It would be far too costly, as it would entail the degradation of my husband, and I will never be a party to injuring him. He has been forced to act against his inclinations, and I understand and do not blame him. The authors of my downfall are the King and Von Metzsch. The King will soon render his account to a Higher Power, who will mete out his judgment. I therefore leave my father-in-law to God. Baron von Metzsch will live on in fancied security, but the day will come when my injuries will cry out against him. My friends, I await that day in patience and—I am content to wait."

The Socialists seemed much impressed, but they could not conceal their disappointment at my non-compliance with their wishes. The episode showed me how much the people loved me, and it was a source of the greatest consolation to my heart.

On October 15, 1904, my father-in-law died, after much suffering. He was unable to lie down owing to dreadful fits of suffocation, and I am told it was pitiable to see the fanatical old man gasping for breath in his chair. When he felt that his hour had come he asked to see me, and said he could not die peacefully unless I were brought to him. Von Metzsch was repeatedly urged by the dying monarch to send for me, but, although he promised to do so, he never

intended that we should meet this side of the grave.

The King asked my husband to arrange matters, but Frederick-August was told that his father was the victim of delusions, and that when he was in complete possession of his faculties my name was never mentioned by him. By those hours of torturing remorse I was avenged for the years of suffering my father-in-law inflicted on me, and I have learned to pardon some things due to his bigoted fanaticism which extinguished his better nature.

I sent a wreath inscribed "Louisa" on the day before his funeral, and when it was brought into the death-chamber, some of the zealous Court officials decided that it had better be removed. The matter was mentioned to my husband, and he was asked if he wished the wreath returned to me.

"Certainly not," said Frederick-August. "Let the wreath remain where it is," and for those kindly words I have often inwardly thanked him.

I had always hoped, and so did my family, that directly my husband became King of Saxony, he would free himself from the influence of his entourage, and that better days would be in store for me. Alas! when a pliant nature is dominated by unscrupulous men, it has little or no chance of escaping from their toils.

Although Frederick-August was now a King and could *do* all, he did not at this crisis *dare* all, and things remained as before.

I was bitterly disappointed, and I saw that I must face the future alone, so as I have always been prompt to act, I decided to make a home for myself and Monica in Italy.

* * * * *

Leopold's marriage had not been a success for, like most of the members of my house, he seems to be very unlucky in love; indeed, in the ordinary affairs of life our family rarely does anything in the accepted way, and we afford a fascinating study for those interested in heredity. It has always been usual to judge us Habsburgs as perfectly normal beings, who do astounding things solely because it pleases us; and our mania for self-effacement is, perhaps, the most curious of our idiosyncrasies. It seems to me that, at certain crises in our lives, we are seized by abnormal and slumbering forces which temporarily create neurotic disturbances, under the influence of which we commit acts of impulse that frequently have lifelong consequences. Our position does not allow us to have any really intimate friends who could persuade or influence us in a nerve-storm, and the result is that a Habsburg generally seeks counsel from a Habsburg, a course which seldom makes for wise decisions.

MY HUSBAND: A SNAPSHOT TAKEN BY MYSELF

As I have often speculated as to the cause of those "nerve-storms" which plunge us into unhappiness and disaster, I feel I cannot do better than quote some observations communicated to a friend of mine by that distinguished young physician, Dr. W. Brown Thomson of London.

"There can be no doubt that from Ferdinand I., the son of a vicious father and an insane mother, Joanna the Mad, the House of Habsburg derives its psychoneurosis. Its insanity comes from the Spanish connection and the symptoms were aggravated by marriages with the Bourbons, which brought in their train all the defects of character which marked that unstable though brilliant family.

"Up to the time of Maria-Theresa, occasional attempts seem to have been made to counteract the deleterious influences of the Spanish connection. A wife was chosen for the Emperor Charles from the healthy House of Bavaria, and in the offspring of this union, nine in number, there was no trace of the taint. This does not prove, however, that it was permanently eradicated; it was simply latent for the time being, as the normal element was powerful enough to hold the abnormal in check. The stock of this period bade fair to eliminate the diathesis, and might have done so had not the

family tree been once more sapped by the marriage of Ferdinand III. with a princess of Spain, who was herself a normal individual, though the immediate result of the union was once more to fortify the attenuated taint. It is an axiom in heredity that the reappearance of any family taint among its descendants is in some degree proportionate to the frequency with which it has occurred among their ancestors. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising to find a 'throw-back' in the offspring; and of the two children born of the marriage in question, the species was perpetuated by Leopold, who to say the least, was a man of weak constitution and eccentric disposition. His marriage with Magdalene-Therese was in every way commendable, since her lineage bore no trace of the taint which characterised that of the Habsburgs. This augured well for the future, and one might without fear of contradiction regard this marriage as the dawning of a new era, and the consolidating of the hopes of the Habsburgs.

"In the next generation there are evidences of the addition of further mental ballast, as the result of the marriage of the Emperor Charles VI. with Elizabeth of Brunswick, which progenerated that famous Empress of Austria—Maria-Theresa—in whose person, and under

whose sway, the Habsburgs reached the highest pinnacle of their fame.

"Originally a powerful and healthy stock, we have witnessed the contamination of the Habsburgs by the psychoneurosis of the Spanish royal family, which in its turn was counteracted by careful selection culminating in the birth of the brilliant Maria-Theresa, at which stage the Habsburg lineage would seem to have cleared itself of the taint which was so conspicuous in their ancestors. There can only be one explanation of this improvement, namely that it was the result of these happily chosen alliances.

* * * * *

"The second epoch of the Austrian Habsburgs shows the lamentable results of inbred marriages amongst tainted stock; and it is not to be wondered at that the offspring in the later generations appear in an unfavourable light. No greater handicap for the future of any generation can be imagined than to start life with an inheritance of neurosis or psychoneurosis from both parents and their collaterals. We have here a specific and defined inheritance displaying itself in insanity and epilepsy; or in the less-defined but nevertheless important series of manifestations grouped under the heading of neurasthenia, which comprise insufficient will-power, nervous prostration, lack of mental

concentration, self-effacement, hatred of surroundings, and an uncontrollable desire to shun the society of one's kind. There are, in addition, curious digressions of conduct, and variations of character, which are usually almost inexplicable, and seem to be automatically exercised. Yet at times these people would pass muster in the category of normal beings. Again, the predisposition may change in expression in the same generation as well as in separate generations. Thus we find insanity in the one generation followed by epilepsy, alcoholism, and libertinism in another.

"The brain responds instinctively by feeling, and by reflex actions, to almost every influence outside it, and in these responses no two brains act alike. The equipment of the brain may work harmoniously for years, but under the strain of some constitutional crisis, the mental springs, strained beyond the limits of endurance, snap—and the inherited traits which have lain dormant for years will manifest themselves in one or other of the above ways. It is not the inherent desire to commit flagrant indiscretions, but an overmastering wish to separate themselves from their surroundings that goads them to perform rash deeds, and all these phenomena are the result of an *inherited neurosis* in a constitution whose dynamical power is unstable and eccentric.

"With a heritage like that of the Habsburgs we can only expect disaster to follow disaster, and the seed sown in the varied strains of ancestry to manifest itself in the offspring. The House of Habsburg exemplifies the influence of that great law of heredity which is such an important factor in moulding the character of rulers, and in directing the destinies of their countries; and when we examine each link of the genealogical chain, and observe the appreciation or depreciation of the offspring as the result of their union with the normal or with unhealthy families, we can deal with the problem on a scientific basis. It is only by taking one generation in conjunction with another, correlating and interpreting all the psychological phenomena and extending our field of operations back into the ninth and tenth generations that we are able to reach some tangible and pertinent reason to account for the perversions of character in the Habsburgs.

"They are extraordinary people, brilliant, gifted, fascinating and reckless, but their sins and indiscretions are not the result of a love of either; they are generally brought about by environment and the dire influence of suggestion, and in my opinion are only to be looked upon as the unhappy and (in their calmer moments) the unwilling victims of heredity."

A most mysterious and interesting member of my father's family is my Uncle John, who is known to the world as "John Orth," I say *is*, because I believe he is still alive and is only waiting for the Emperor's death to return to Austria.

My Uncle John was much younger than papa, short in stature, with brown hair and blue eyes, and most fascinating. Like papa, he did everything he attempted well and thoroughly; he was also like papa a gifted musician and highly accomplished. He often visited us at Salzburg, and we were great friends; in fact he wanted to get permission from the Vatican to marry me, as he considered I was the ideal mate for a man of his temperament; but although the Church sometimes sanctions a union between uncle and niece I could never have countenanced such a thing, for I only looked upon Uncle John as a very delightful relation who possessed papa's perfect understanding of my character.

Many and varied have been the conjectures put forward to account for the strange disappearance of the Archduke. It has been said that he was implicated in the tragedy of Meyerling, and in consequence renounced his titles and estates, and left his native land for ever. This is absolutely untrue. The real reason which caused "John Orth" to leave Vienna was wounded pride arising from a stubborn unyielding will which

would not brook any contradiction. This statement coming from me, his niece, will probably destroy some of the mystery and romance of the story, but is nevertheless accurate.

My uncle held an important position in the Austrian army. The late Field-Marshal Von Moltke, considered him one of the most accomplished strategists in Europe, and he controlled the military forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was most progressive in his ideas, tried to reorganise the army, and obtained the Emperor's permission to draw up a scheme for reconstruction. This scheme was approved of, and he was then asked to write a kind of "manifesto" incorporating the proposed principal reforms. The manifesto was sent to all the generals and officers, but my uncle had reckoned without the Commander-in-Chief, the Archduke Albrecht, who was one of the veterans of '66. He was deeply offended, and made such an uproar that the Emperor, who hates any kind of disturbance, sent for John and told him he must submit all plans to the Archduke Albrecht. Uncle John, beside himself with rage and mortification, at once issued an appeal to the army asking it to judge between the respective merits of Albrecht and himself, and this daring step so enraged the Emperor that he sent for John and told him he must apologise immediately to the Commander-in-Chief.

There was a violent and heated discussion between the rebellious Archduke and Francis-Joseph. Uncle John said in his bold way that he would leave the army and the Court rather than be dictated to, and he concluded by declaring that he did not care in the least whether he was a member of the Imperial House. A storm followed this rank apostasy, and my uncle, in a fit of ungovernable rage, tore off his Order of the Golden Fleece and flung it at the Emperor.

After this unpardonable insult, the Archduke wrote to the Emperor saying that he was about to leave Austria for ever, and that he renounced all his titles and dignities, and desired to be known henceforth as "John Orth." Francis-Joseph promptly replied that he was free to adopt any name he pleased, but that, once he had quitted Austria, he would be immediately arrested as a renegade if ever he attempted to re-cross the frontier.

Uncle John at once went to see grandmamma, who lived near Gmunden, but he had not the courage to say that he was leaving, perhaps for ever, so he wrote her a letter that was afterwards given to her, in which he told her all that had occurred. He then came to Salzburg, and we listened with excited sympathy to his account of his wrongs, and were greatly

interested in his plans for the future. "John Orth" was emphatic in his declaration never again to lead a restricted life, as he wished to be true to himself. He told us he had decided to become a captain in the Merchant Service, and should at once study for his master's certificate. Leopold and I followed him out of the room, as we hoped he would say something more to us, and we were not disappointed.

My uncle looked at us tenderly, for we were on the verge of tears at the idea of losing our kind and brilliant kinsman, and he then said with calm gravity: "I am about to disappear, my dear children, and I shall do so in such a manner that no one will ever find me. When the Emperor is dead I will return, for then Austria will require my services.

"I wish, Louisa and Leopold, that you could come with me, for we three should lead the life best suited to us. It cannot be, however, and our ways must part here. You are both, like myself, individualities, and like me, you will work out your destinies. But we shall become forces that will eventually be felt. How strange it is," he continued, as though deep in thought, "that our house, hampered and harassed by convention and tradition, should produce such off-shoots. It must be the revolt of the soul against the

imprisoning bands of our world. *Never, never, believe that I am dead, for I will return one day, and we shall meet again and talk of this.*"

These were the last words I heard my uncle speak. He left Salzburg, and some time afterwards we heard of his marriage and purchase of the sailing-vessel "Margherita." The crew were all Croats and Italians, especially selected as trustworthy, capable men, and my uncle navigated the vessel himself by virtue of his master's certificate.

He arrived at La Plata, and then, after a stay of some weeks, he sailed for Valparaiso. Before leaving La Plata he shipped an entirely new crew, and from that day "John Orth," his ship, and all on board have disappeared completely from human ken. The "Margherita" never reached Valparaiso, and if ever she entered another port it was under an altered name.

The chief officer of the vessel came to Salzburg expressly to see papa, and this man told me he was positive John Orth was alive, and had never gone to Valparaiso. He described how, as the old crew stood watching the "Margherita" disappear into the evening mists, the person who stood on the bridge, enveloped in a greatcoat, and muffled to the eyes, was NOT John Orth, but some one impersonating him. The crew in question returned

to Trieste, and one and all believed the evidence of their own eyes at La Plata, and refused to put any credence in the report that their captain had been drowned at sea.

We heard nothing more of him, but I am told that a M. Renaux, who had formerly lived in the Argentine Republic, declared that after he saw John Orth at La Plata he met him in Buenos Ayres, and again at Rio Quarto. M. Renaux returned to France in 1893, but he is positive my uncle is still alive. I, too, feel convinced that he has not found a resting-place in the swaying deeps of the ocean, and his words, "*I will return*," are ever in my mind.

Various impostors have at times claimed to be the missing Archduke, and grandmamma sent large sums of money to one of them. She showed papa letters in which the handwriting was apparently that of Uncle John, but when the police were communicated with they eventually arrested the man, who proved to be a dangerous criminal "wanted" for years!

It has been stated that the Archduke had money in the Swiss banks, but the assertion is inaccurate. All his securities were deposited with Paris, Vienna, and London houses. He never withdrew any money, and the interest must now amount to a large sum. Papa was convinced to the day of his death that his brother

was alive and, as time proves all things, the Emperor's death will perhaps solve the mystery, for Austria may then require the services of John Orth in the international complications which will no doubt follow.

CHAPTER XIX

The Emperor Francis-Joseph : His power in family affairs : The Tragedy of Meyerling : What I know about it : The body under the cover : The Story of Isabella of Parma : "Three hours, three days, three years" : I resolve on a *coup de tête* : Once again in Dresden : I am arrested outside the palace : The attitude of the people : I leave for Leipzig : A wonderful reception : I learn the value of disinterested affection

THE house of Habsburg at the present time is, perhaps, the most uninteresting royal family in Europe as, during the last twenty years, nearly all its striking personalities have either gone into exile or have died.

The Emperor Francis-Joseph has absolute power over the members of his house; he can, at will, strip them of their possessions, deprive them of their titles, and send them penniless into the world. His ideas of family government are mediæval, and he is quite narrow in his judgment of relatives who wish to leave the tradition-paved ways of Court. When he heard of my flight, he said to papa:

"Louisa is dead, I do not care to hear her name."

Francis-Joseph is not, to my mind, a man of strong individuality; he is weak-willed, and has always been so. He shirks responsibility, and instead of helping any one in distress, he shelters himself behind the Throne, and acts as a monarch instead of a man.

He has certainly experienced crushing domestic troubles, but his wonderful constitution has helped him to support anxieties which would have killed any ordinary person. The terrible tragedy of Meyerling, however, was almost more than he could bear. This mysterious affair is the darkest story in the annals of the Habsburgs, and several of its details have been kept secret even from some members of the Imperial family. What I know was told me by papa, who was one of the few people aware of what really happened on that ghastly night.

On January 30, 1889, we had just returned from skating, and found every one at the palace in a state of great excitement on account of a telegram which awaited papa, and which read as follows:

Rudolph has been killed.

Naturally we were all dreadfully distressed

at the news, and the first telegram was speedily followed by another, which stated:

The Crown Prince has killed himself.

Papa immediately left for Vienna, and when he returned, after an absence of some days, he confided to me that he had spoken to Rudolph's valet, who brought his master's body back to Vienna, and the man gave him some curious details of the tragedy.

It appeared that on the fatal evening the hunting party had a very uproarious dinner, and drank heavily. The valet heard a great deal of noise, but did not take much notice, until dreadful moans on the staircase caused him to open his door, and he saw, with indescribable horror, the bleeding form of the Crown Prince being carried upstairs. When the bearers of the body saw the valet, they peremptorily ordered him to go back to his room and wait until they sent for him. He did so, and after a time he was taken to the unfortunate Crown Prince, who lingered for hours in an unconscious state.

Papa said that when he arrived at Vienna Rudolph had been dead barely eight hours. He went into the room at the Hofburg where the body lay, and was horrified to see that the skull was smashed in, and that pieces

of broken bottle-glass protruded from it. The face was quite unrecognisable, and two fingers of the right hand had been cut off. When the body was prepared for the lying-in-State, the face and head were completely covered with a wax mask in order to prevent people from seeing the awful disfigurement, and thus realising what a terrible tragedy had occurred.

The Emperor, who was told as gently as possible about the injuries to his son, summoned a secret conclave at which the whole truth of the night's events was disclosed, and none but those present at that meeting ever knew what had really happened.

A very gruesome story was told me by a forester who had been a gamekeeper at Meyerling. This man once came to the Imperial estates near Salzburg, to superintend the planting of some trees when we were at the shooting-box. I asked him what he knew about the death of the Crown Prince, and his story certainly bore all the impress of truth.

He said that he had been ordered, on the night of the tragedy, to come to the lodge at half-past eight the next morning. When he arrived he was very surprised at the absolute stillness which seemed to pervade everywhere; and, bewildered and apprehensive, he opened a door of which he possessed a duplicate key,

and went into the billiard-room. Here all was confusion; the tables and chairs were overturned, broken glass was scattered on the carpet, and the cover of the billiard-table lay on the floor.

The gamekeeper was not astonished at the state of the room, as rough nights were the accepted order of things at Meyerling, but something odd about the appearance of the fallen cover arrested his attention. He stooped to pick it up, and, as he did so, he saw a foot protruding from under it; when he lifted it he was horrified to find the nude body of a dead woman bleeding from revolver wounds. The frightened man rushed from the room and cried for assistance, but no one came, and the house was as still as the tomb. He went upstairs to the Crown Prince's bedroom, where he saw the valet and the dying man.

That was all he would tell me about this most terrible affair, and the world will never know the whole truth. The Emperor was asked by the Austrian people to disclose the facts about the fate of the Crown Prince, but he absolutely refused to do so, and incurred great unpopularity in consequence.

All sorts of stories were current, but my belief is that certain disclosures were made to Rudolph in order to prove that an insurmount-

able barrier existed between Marie Vetschera and himself, and that any affection between them, as lovers, was impossible.

I fancy he told her this at Meyerling, and, perhaps, over-excited with champagne and half-maddened by the horrible thing revealed to her, the unfortunate woman attacked Rudolph with a bottle and dealt him some murderous blows on his head and face. She was then, in all probability, shot down when the other members of the party realised what had happened.

However, as I have already said, the exact truth will never be known. "John Orth" was in the secret, but it has been, on the whole, well kept, and the mystery remains a mystery.

* * * * *

A most interesting Habsburg story, which has never been published, concerns Maria-Theresa's son, the Emperor Joseph II., who married Isabella, daughter of Ferdinand, Duke of Parma —one of the Spanish Bourbons—and if I may here digress, I should like to tell it.

Isabella was a lovely girl, and her ambitious mother, a daughter of Louis XV. of France, naturally wished her to make a brilliant marriage. The gratification of the Duke and Duchess of Parma was extreme when the Emperor Joseph sent his Ambassador to ask for Isabella's hand, and her proud parents at once gave a willing assent

Unfortunately for her future happiness, the girl had already bestowed her affection on a young Spaniard at her father's Court. The lovers met in secret and at night enacted the parts of Romeo and Juliet, from the balcony of Isabella's room.

It is not, therefore, surprising that the news of her proposed marriage to another threw Isabella into a pitiable state of despair. She implored her lover to fly with her and marry her as soon as possible, and at last he consented, although he fully realised the danger and trouble attending such a daring step.

Isabella took her maids into her confidence and, needless to say, was betrayed by them, as servants of a certain class always abuse the confidence and kindness of their employers.

The longed-for evening at last came; horses were in readiness for the eloping couple, but the anxious girl waited for her lover in vain. From her window she saw dark forms passing and re-passing amid the trees and suddenly a scream broke the stillness of the night; it was followed by another and fainter cry, and Isabella could bear no more; hardly knowing what she did she climbed over the balcony, and fear lending her wings, she ran like a wild thing through the gardens. Some one was lying on the grass, and her anguished gaze saw that it was her sweet-

heart. He was dying, but was just able to tell her that two men had attacked and stabbed him. The poor girl looked with unutterable love into his fast glazing eyes, and managed to catch the words, "In three . . . you," but he expired before he was able to finish the sentence.

Isabella fainted and was carried back to the palace, where she lay for a long time unconscious. When she came to herself, her one prayer was that she might die, and she imagined that the words, "In three . . . you," meant that in three hours she would rejoin her murdered lover.

Death did not come, however, and the next day she was obliged to receive the Austrian Ambassador. So she made one despairing appeal to her father.

"You *force me* to do this, Sire?" she faltered through her sobs.

"Yes," said the Duke. "I *do:* your lover will trouble me no more, and I can dispose of you as I will."

After the Princess had received the betrothal ring, she went back to her rooms, hoping that in *three days* her sufferings would be terminated, but when the third day passed, she concluded that it would be in three weeks that she should die.

The marriage was celebrated by proxy, and Isabella left Parma for Vienna. Directly the Emperor saw his beautiful young wife he fell desperately in love with her, and she received all his protestations of affection with a sad dignity which was infinitely appealing.

When the newly wedded pair found themselves alone in their bridal chamber, Isabella stood silently by the window and looked out into the night; the moon rode high in the serene heavens, and no doubt she thought of that other night when its rays had shown her the face of her dying lover. Her husband bent over her with passionate endearments, and she said, looking at him with touching sweetness:

"I *will* be kind, and I *will* make you a good wife, but I am doomed to die, either in three months or in three years."

Isabella was greatly beloved by all with whom she came in contact, but her health rapidly declined after her marriage, and although the birth of a daughter was a source of joy to the Emperor, the doctors were apprehensive about the mother's delicate constitution. The Empress seemed as though she belonged to another world, and was always waiting to hold commune with some one invisible; she was highly strung, and it is said that once when she went to the performance of a new opera by Gluck, one of the

scenes brought back so forcibly her own tragic love-story that she fainted, and for some time it seemed doubtful whether she would recover.

Three years passed, and when the anniversary of her lover's death came round, she seemed absolutely transfigured with joy, and became once more a laughing, happy girl. That night, exquisitely dressed, radiant and charming, she supped with the Emperor in their private apartments at Schönbrunn. All at once, without a word, she rose from the table, and made her way into the gardens, walking quickly; just as she was about to cross the parterre, she suddenly stopped, stretched out her arms as if in welcome, and fell dead.

The story goes that the Empress looked angelically lovely and peaceful in her rose-filled coffin, and it is said that no one knew whence the flowers came. The Emperor was inconsolable at her loss; but, as the child soon followed its mother, he married again for reasons of State. That marriage, also, was celebrated by proxy, but Joseph II. never lived with his second wife, whose neck and arms were covered with spots due to a skin disease, and he was wont to say that no other woman existed who could compare with sweet Isabella of Parma.

* * * * *

I fear I have digressed widely by recounting

so much gossip about the Habsburgs, and I must now proceed with my own story.

In December 1904, I took a villa at San Domenico on the Fiesolean Hills, as I thought the air and situation would prove beneficial to delicate little Monica. I was obsessed with a desire to see my children again; they were never out of my thoughts, and at last I felt I could endure the separation no longer. I saw plainly that any appeal to Dresden would be disregarded, so I determined to leave persuasion alone and make a *coup de tête* instead.

I therefore lost no time in leaving for Leipzig, where my lawyer lived; I drove to his house, and told him I wished him to accompany me at once to Dresden, and that I relied on his absolute secrecy in the matter. We accordingly took train to Dresden; but, before we left Leipzig, my "chivalrous" legal adviser telephoned to the Dresden police and informed them of my coming.

We arrived at Dresden quite early in the morning; it was cold and foggy, and the sun hung like a ball of fire in the winter mists. As I drove over the old bridge my emotions almost overcame me. I felt like a dreamer in a dream city, until the thought that I was now near my beloved children recalled me to myself.

I stopped the cab at the shop of the perfumer

who used to supply me when I was Crown Princess; and as I walked quietly in, everybody was busy, some assistants dressing the windows, while others were setting out soaps and essences on the counter. The proprietor came forward to serve me, and, turning, I lifted my heavy veil and looked at him. The poor man was so overcome that he was unable to speak for a few seconds, and, when he at last found words, all he could stammer was:

"Our Louisa! Our Louisa!"

I told him what had brought me to Dresden, and his sympathies were all with me and my errand; he informed me in which part of the Castle my children's rooms were situated, and as that was all I desired to know, I re-entered the cab and drove to the Neue Markt, where I dismissed it. I was terrified lest I should be recognised, and as I walked through the market to the Taschenberg Palace, I observed a man staring at me. I paid no attention, and hurried to the entrance of the palace; with trembling fingers I was just on the point of pressing the electric button when my hand was suddenly seized and I confronted the man who had previously attracted my attention.

He took oft his hat and bowed. "Imperial Highness," he said; "you cannot see the King or the royal children."

MY DAUGHTERS, THE PRINCESSES MARGARET, MARIA-ALIX, AND ANNA-MONICA

"Who are you?" I demanded.

He produced a badge which showed that he was connected with the criminal police.

"Your coming was known to us," he said, "the palace and the castle are surrounded by our men, and you must at once return with me to your hotel."

As he spoke he blew his whistle, and two policemen appeared; I saw that resistance would be useless, and made no remark, but I think this moment was one of the most humiliating and distressing in my life. I looked up at the rooms which had been my home for eleven years, but I saw them through a mist of tears. However, I called all my courage to my aid, and behaved with the dignity of a descendant of Maria-Theresa.

An icy wind laden with stabbing flakes of snow was blowing as I and my "guard of honour" crossed the square. As the trams filled with business people passed, I became aware of startled faces looking at me, and in a moment the atmosphere was charged with electricity. The policemen escorted me to the Hotel Belle Vue, opposite the Opera; that again was familiar ground to me, and I thought of the days when I had driven there in one of the royal carriages, and never dreamed that I should be arrested on foot in my own capital.

When we reached the hotel, I was asked to go upstairs with the man who had taken me into custody, and a room was chosen which had no outlook on the square; it was most cheerless, but I sat down to await events. I was by now aware that my lawyer had betrayed me, and when he came into my presence, I told him my candid opinion of his despicable conduct. At last the manager of the hotel appeared with a magnificent bouquet of roses, which he presented to me with tears in his eyes and his assurances of love and devotion.

The Chief of Police was my next visitor; he did not attempt to remove his hat, and said roughly:

"I am deputed, Countess,* by the Ministry to offer you a special train so that you can leave Dresden at once."

I advanced to the centre of the room.

"You are wrong," I said quietly. "You cannot offer a special train except to a queen; it would not be permissible for the *Countess Montignoso* to avail herself of it. Return to the Ministers, and say that Louisa of Saxony

* Countess Montignoso was a Tuscan title which I sometimes used when travelling incognito. After the divorce proceedings at Dresden it was, with obvious motives, employed by the Saxon Court when it had occasion to refer to me.

will choose her own time for her departure. But you can also tell the Ministers that they have no cause for apprehension. I shall not appeal to the people; my only wish is to see my husband and my children."

After the Chief of Police had left the hotel I sat down and chatted to his subordinate, who was genuinely distressed.

"Oh, forgive me, forgive me," he kept on repeating. "Alas! that *I* should be compelled to arrest 'Our Louisa.'" I comforted him, and he told me how much the people loved me, and how well he remembered the days of my early married life. Poor man! I always hope he realised that I bore him no malice for the unwilling part he played.

I wrote to the King, and when the chamberlain, Herr von Criegern, came to interview me, I asked him to give my husband the letter. He laughed rudely.

"Give your letter to the King! Certainly not! Do you for one moment suppose that his Majesty ever receives any of your communications? Other people take good care that he is not troubled by you."

I could have killed the man. "How *dare* you stand there and say this to ME," I demanded; "if you will not give the letter to my husband I will find some one who will."

The letter was eventually given to Frederick-August at a "shoot" which had been hastily arranged that morning in order to get him away from Dresden. I am told that when he read it he nearly fainted, and at once ordered a carriage to take him back, as he wished to see me. My enemies had expected this, so he was told I had already left.

I demanded an audience with Von Metzsch, who was too cowardly to face me. He sent the chamberlain, however, who said that nothing could be done. I knew that this man disliked me, but even he seemed somewhat sympathetic, and urged me to leave Dresden as soon as possible, for the news of my arrival had spread, and the police were afraid of the hostile crowd, who were all in my favour.

I lunched with the lawyers, and my cheerless sitting-room had now become a perfect bower of flowers, which arrived every few minutes. During the meal my attention was arrested by a sound somewhat resembling distant thunder.

"What is that noise? I inquired.

The reply to my question was given by the Chief of Police, who rushed into the room *sans cérémonie.*

"Imperial Highness," he cried, "I beg of you to leave Dresden, for in a few moments we shall be powerless. Already the crowds

fill the streets and the square; they threaten to break into the hotel and carry you away. I implore you not to be the cause of bloodshed."

"All this is your own fault," I said, coldly. "You arrest me *en plein jour*. What else can you expect? But as I do not wish to expose my people to injury, I will leave the hotel—after I have finished my lunch."

I was as good as my word, and when I had collected my small belongings, went downstairs with the officials. As soon as we reached the entrance-hall, the people crowding round the door saw me, and a tremendous cry went up of "Our Louisa!"

The Chief of Police wished me to drive in a closed carriage, but I refused, and when at last I emerged from the hotel I saw a sight I shall never forget.

The whole square was packed with people; the air was filled with angry cries. When my carriage appeared the mob broke through the cordon and rushed to the vehicle.

"Louisa, stay with us," they shouted.

"Death to Von Metzsch!"

"Down with the Church!"

Some ran to the horses' heads and tried to pull the coachman off his box, others pressed forward to grasp my hand. I stood up in the carriage and endeavoured to speak. A roar of voices arose.

"Let your people know how you have been treated! Write a manifesto and justify yourself! Don't be afraid, the whole of Saxony is with you."

"Hush," I said, as soon as I could make myself heard. "Don't make a disturbance. I love you with all my heart. Think of me as an unhappy mother. I will speak one day and let you all know the truth."

At last we managed to reach the railway-station, and the whole route was lined with cheering crowds; never before had I seen such a demonstration. I was taken to the departure platform by the recently constructed approach, and the station was thronged with tearful people, eager to show their respect for me. I found my *coupé* a mass of flowers, There were many letters there, too, and the burden of all the communications was—*justify yourself.*

Amid the waving of handkerchiefs and cries of "Au revoir, Louisa," the train steamed out of the station.

Wherever it stopped crowds assembled, and everywhere I met with assurances of love and loyalty. I had a long talk with the Chief of Police; I remembered him when he held a very subordinate position, and I could not help remarking: "Well, it is a strange world. I

suppose that in your wildest dreams you never imagined it would be your lot to escort me to the frontier!"

I arrived at Leipzig in the evening; the whole station had been appropriated by the students, who were dressed in black and wore black hats, black ties, and black gloves, for all the world like mourners at a funeral! I was received by the head of the Leipzig police, and, escorted by him and the Dresden officer, I passed through the black and silent crowd.

Suddenly there were cries of: "Louisa! Louisa!" "We will carry you back to Dresden!" and I felt myself lifted by strong arms, and though I begged my supporters to desist, the cries continued.

"Keep quiet," I said to those nearest to me. "you must not make these demonstrations. I promise one day that you shall know all."

We drove to the lawyer's house, but the people ran behind the carriage, throwing flowers, and imploring me not to be driven out of Saxony. I was quite exhausted by the excitement of the day, but as I was obliged to leave Leipzig that night, I returned to the station after I had finished discussing business matters with my lawyer.

The crowd still filled the station, and the cries of the populace never ceased.

"We will kill your enemies. You allow yourself to be trampled on, but your silence is more eloquent than words."

"Tell everything; we know who your enemies are."

Others screamed, "Revenge! Revenge! We will not let Louisa go."

The secret police were everywhere, trying to discover the authors of these treasonable cries, but they met with little or no success.

I quite expected that a seat would be reserved for me, but such was not the case, and I was put into a "through" *coupé* to Frankfort. The train was crowded, and had it not been for the courtesy of a gentleman who gave me his seat I should have been obliged to make the journey standing.

So ended my *coup de tête*. I did not regret my useless and painful experience, because it showed me that I was still beloved in Saxony, and I realised the wonderful value of disinterested affection. As I sat in the hot *coupé*, stared at by inquisitive eyes, bereft of all royal dignity, an exiled woman and a desolate mother, I felt a glow of pride when I recalled the honest, excited faces of my adherents, and I heard again the shouts of "Louisa" which I knew came straight from loyal hearts.

CHAPTER XX

Popular feeling in Saxony : Life at San Domenico : I am not allowed to remain in peace : Alma Muth, spy : The King of Saxony's lawyer arrives in Florence : An interview at the Consulate : I refuse to surrender Monica : The siege of the villa : I turn Alma Muth out of the house : She goes to Pegli with Dr. Körner : What was overheard in the restaurant car : I make the acquaintance of another spy : Frau Ida Kremer : Her methods : A vile book : I receive permission to see my children : Our meeting at Munich : I resolve to let Monica go to Saxony : My second marriage : I conclude my story

My *coup de tête* caused tremendous excitement all over Saxony. The accounts of my arrival at Dresden and reception at Leipzig were ordered to be suppressed in all the newspapers, and it was forbidden to mention my name. If I had remained another twenty-four hours there would have been a revolution, and the authorities were fully aware of the gravity of the situation. On the night I left Saxony, myself and my wrongs were the only topic of conversation, and afterwards most extraordinary scenes took place.

In tiny cottages far away in the country my photograph was encircled with chaplets of flowers, candles were burned before it, women wore brooches containing my likeness, and although the police afterwards prohibited the sale of my picture-postcards, hundreds of thousands were sold in one day alone, and during the months of January and February after I left Dresden the demand for them was enormous.

If any officials were known to favour me it was all up with their prospects of promotion. When I first left Dresden there was a refreshment buffet at the Opera where excellent chocolate was sold, and the proprietor sold medallions of chocolate stamped with my likeness, and called the bonbon "Louisa Chocolate." It sold remarkably well, but one day the man was sent for by the management of the Opera and told he must give up the buffet within twenty-four hours on account of his selling the "treasonable" chocolate. The unlucky proprietor, who was one of my partisans, wrote and told me what had occurred, adding that whatever happened to his fortunes, his devotion would never swerve.

These sentiments of loyalty still prevail, and are the greatest source of consolation to me. I thank all my unknown friends who write so kindly, and I value every letter I receive. On

my last birthday I acknowledged four thousand cards of greeting, a physically exhausting task, but one which was only a labour of love.

My life at San Domenico was for a time uneventful, but naturally my enemies did not for long allow me to continue in peace. Their object was to find out whether I had a love-affair, and they employed spies to attain their ignoble ends. When Monica was born I chose her a Protestant nurse, whom I liked and trusted, but this did not suit the Court, who insisted that I should have a Catholic nurse of their own selection. As I desired, for several reasons, to avoid friction over the child, I agreed to accede to their wish, and accordingly Fräulein Alma Muth was sent from Dresden to take charge of Monica.

One day I was told over the telephone that I had a spy in my household and that this person was my child's nurse. As the information seemed genuine, I made secret inquiries on my own account, and discovered that Alma Muth corresponded with the Saxon Court through the medium of the German Consulate at Florence. She had asked me to allow her to take a daily walk in the grounds of the villa, and I found out that when she did so, she had long, unobserved conversations with an employee at the Consulate, who came there for the purpose of being told

what I was doing. I also ascertained that she telephoned to the Consulate, but when I taxed her with her treacherous behaviour she flatly denied everything.

The morning after my conversation with Muth, I received a telephonic message from a hotel in Florence, informing me that the King of Saxony's lawyer, Dr. Körner, had just arrived, and wished to see me. I replied that I was quite ready to receive him, and in about an hour's time he drove up in a landau.

The lawyer had a long discussion with me about Monica's future, but nothing was settled, and I felt that his visit was only a ruse. I was afterwards asked to go to the Consulate, but when I arrived there was no one to receive me. At last, however, after a long wait, Körner came on the scene. In a very rude manner he told me that he was ordered to take Monica away, and he showed me a document which empowered him to act exactly as he thought fit.

I flung the paper in his face, but all he said was:

"Countess, be ready at two o'clock this afternoon to give up your child."

I felt like a tigress at bay, and with blazing eyes I confronted him, saying:

"You will tell me *why*, before I shall allow you to take Monica; try and get her by force if

MY YOUNGEST DAUGHTER, PRINCESS ANNA-MONICA
OF SAXONY

you can, but so long as I am free I will defend her and defy you." He spat on the floor.

"What can *you* do?" he answered, jeeringly.

I wasted no time, but motored back to the villa. I sent for my butler and my cook, and told them that the house was to be well guarded, and that if either of them betrayed me I would have the traitor instantly punished. I also gave orders that the telephone should be disconnected, and all the bell-wires cut, and I especially instructed them not to lose sight of Alma Muth for a single instant.

At two o'clock Muth came to me and asked whether I had seen the King's lawyer. She was perfectly furious at my contemptuous attitude. At last I heard the noise of carriage wheels, and peeping through the blinds I saw a landau coming up the drive. When it drew up I saw that it contained Körner and the villainous Taschenberg servant who had, as I afterwards heard, begged to be allowed to come in order to gloat over my misfortunes.

Both men alighted, but, after wasting three-quarters of an hour in trying to effect an entrance, they were obliged to return to Florence. The telephone was then resorted to, but that was useless, so, fuming and fretting, the lawyer again came up to the villa.

A regular "siege" then commenced. Muth

went to the maids and demanded to be let out. She had up till then relied on these women, whom she had bribed, but she did not reckon on the temperament of Italian servants. Directly they saw my attitude of inflexible determination, they refused to help her in any way, and she was beside herself with rage and mortification.

It was not unamusing inside the villa, for the chef had armed himself with a revolver, which he repeatedly pointed at Muth, as a gentle reminder that she was not by any means having things all her own way.

The next day I went into Florence to interview the King's lawyer, and remained in his office from nine A.M. to five P.M. He read a long statement in German which Muth had sent him, and he argued and threatened until my patience was quite exhausted. I was faint from want of food, for no refreshment was offered me, although Fräulein Muth was given chocolate and biscuits.

At five o'clock we went to the villa, where another statement by Muth was produced. She nearly went mad with rage when it was read, and declared that she would swear nothing. The villa servants were next interrogated, but they blandly maintained that they could neither read nor write, and that any statements said to be theirs must be inventions.

The lawyer was quite mortified, and he said, bitterly: "He laughs best who laughs last."

I agreed with him that this was often the case, and he continued: "I shall bring some luggage the next time I come for the Princess, and when I take her to Saxony she shall not wear a single thing you have touched."

When he returned later, he failed as before to gain admittance to the villa. He was reinforced this time by the German Consul, who said in a loud pompous voice: "In the name of William II., I ask you, Countess Montignoso, to open your doors."

As I took not the slightest notice, Körner went to the Italian police, and asked them to assist him in enforcing my obedience to his Sovereign's orders, but he received a reply to the effect that the Italian police recognised no orders but those of the King of Italy.

Night fell, and from my bedroom window I watched the progress of events. I observed a carriage coming up the road; it stopped, and some one made flashes with a hand electric lamp. This, as I afterwards discovered, was the signal to Muth that Körner was waiting, and that later she was to bring Monica out through the garden without my knowledge.

Naturally there was no sleep for us, and at

two A.M. the butler informed me that some telegrams had just been delivered, and that the boys wished to see me. They told me that when they passed the carriage, which was drawn up on one side of the road, some one inside hailed them and asked where they were going. They replied: "To the villa with telegrams—What are *you* doing here?"

"Oh," answered the coachman, "we're waiting to take away an insane lady who is inside the house."

It was a bitter night, and Körner and his friends kept themselves warm with plentiful supplies of cognac; but at four A.M. they apparently grew tired of waiting, and drove off, leaving me mistress of the situation.

I instinctively felt, however, that something was still afoot, so I went upstairs to the night nursery, where I found Monica dressed for travelling and her trunk packed. Muth was in her own room, so I told the butler to go at once and tell her that some one from the Consulate wished to see her in the garden, and that, in order to get her out of the house, he was to pretend to give this information without my knowledge. The ruse was completely successful. The butler unlocked a side door, and Muth rushed out, hatless and coatless, into the night, only to discover that she had been duped, and was unable to get back.

I called the trembling servants, and said in my most awe-inspiring manner: "If any one *dares* cross me, it will mean immediate arrest." Then I told the maids to collect Muth's clothes and throw them out of the window. This was done, and her luggage was then put outside by the frightened girls, while the butler mounted guard with a pistol.

Muth rushed about the garden like a person demented, and at last went to San Domenico and telephoned to Körner, who sent up a carriage to take her and her belongings away. The siege of the villa lasted a whole fortnight, and then my enemies gave it up in despair. It afforded a great deal of amusement, plenty of "copy" for the Press, and was the subject of numerous caricatures in the Dresden comic papers.

Dr. Körner left Florence, but as Fräulein Muth's nerves were rather shattered after the exciting time through which she had passed, he very kindly took her to Pegli on the Riviera to recuperate, and I have no doubt she derived great benefit from her restful change. They returned to Dresden together, but, unfortunately for themselves, they were indiscreet enough to abuse the King of Saxony and his Ministers while dining in the restaurant car. Their remarks were overheard by a

German lawyer, who reported them to the Dresden authorities, with the result that Körner is no longer employed by the King.

After Fräulein Muth's departure, Von Metzsch made another attempt to ruin my position. I had insisted on my faithful nurse returning to my service, and as this greatly annoyed my enemy, he again issued an order that Monica should have a Catholic governess. He sent a Jewish convert, Frau Ida Kremer, who was entirely in the hands of the priests, and she duly arrived at Florence. She is an ugly, hunchbacked woman, whose mind is as distorted as her body. I can say with perfect truth that she was a most accomplished spy, and as she has a very vivid imagination, she invented what she was unable to find out.

When Frau Kremer had been with me a few days, an unknown friend warned me by telephone to be very careful, as my house again harboured a traitor, and that Von Metzsch's agents intended to force a sudden entrance one night to see if they could discover me in compromising circumstances. This plan was actually carried out. The villa was broken into on one occasion, but naturally nothing was stolen, and the "burglars" were disturbed before they made their way upstairs. Another time my garage was entered and some tyres were taken

away, and I often heard mysterious noises at night. But I fancy Frau Kremer's reports at last convinced her employers that my mode of life was above suspicion, and I was troubled no more by night alarms.

Frau Kremer left me after a stay of six weeks, and concocted a wicked book purporting to deal with me and my life in Florence. It was a scandalous production, but I suppose it satisfied those who instigated her to write it. She tried to sell it to a "backstairs" publisher in Berlin; but directly my friends in Saxony heard that negotiations were in progress, they threatened to boycott any bookseller who supplied the production, and it was eventually issued as a feuilleton in a Berlin paper. It was a tissue of lies, with an occasional grain of truth for, as the authoress had eaten my salt, she had had many opportunities of studying me, and several things in the book could only have been learnt from me. Unfortunately this abominable work, like the bogus "Confessions of a Princess," did me a great deal of harm; but the accusations it contained were too vile to answer, and I took no steps to repudiate them publicly.

I was, by this time, quite used to scandalous reports being circulated about me; I could hardly ever take up a newspaper without coming upon something about myself, and I read with

some amusement the fabricated accounts of my extraordinary and extravagant tastes. But the things which really pained and disgusted me were the unfounded reports about my private life. If I spoke to a man he was at once assumed to be my lover, and it was impossible for me to enjoy his friendship without the worst construction being placed upon the circumstance.

My life was absolutely dull. I rode and drove, and in the summer I travelled, and occasionally visited papa and mamma who were now quite friendly to me. My one bright experience was in October 1906, when I received permission from the King to have an hour and a half's interview with my darling boys. I was overjoyed at his kindness, and decided to take Monica to make the acquaintance of her brothers and sisters.

The meeting took place at the Saxon Embassy at Munich. Mamma went with me, and I was told that I must conform to prescribed conditions and regulations as to my behaviour. I was not to be permitted a private interview, and I was expressly forbidden to say a word about my departure from Saxony and my present mode of life.

When we arrived at Munich we drove to the Embassy, and the Saxon Ambassador, instead of waiting for me upstairs, as had been arranged,

MY THREE BOYS. ·LEFT TO RIGHT: IURY, ERNI, TIA
[MAY 1909]

came down to my carriage, and, kissing my hand, said with tears in his eyes: "Come quickly, Princess, for your little ones anxiously await their mother."

We hurried upstairs and he threw open the door of the salon. It was a dark day, and the first things I saw were the silhouettes of Iury and Tia who were sitting by the window. I advanced; the room seemed swimming round me; I was overcome by a thousand emotions, and I could hardly believe that my darlings were actually before me. Trembling—my heart filled with a mother's aching love—I clasped my children in my arms and they clung to me as though we had never been separated. We lunched together, and the boys told me that "papa" always made them pray for mamma, who was so far away. This remembrance of me was bitter sweet, and I thought with a pang that if only Frederick-August had brought the children to me how different things might have been! Time passed only too quickly, and then came the moment of parting—and I cannot find words to describe it. The children went to Cannes, and I returned to Florence with Monica.

Every year the King asked me to give up Monica, and each time he did so I begged to be allowed to keep her a little longer. Monica was a really beautiful child; she had a sweet,

sunny disposition, and the most winning ways. We were inseparable, and her companionship made my life so much happier that I could hardly face even the idea of parting with her for a single day. Tremendous pressure, however, was eventually brought to bear upon me. It was pointed out that my love was selfish, and I was urged not to deprive my child of the advantages of her birthright by insisting that she should share my fallen fortunes. I have always endeavoured to preserve an entirely impartial judgment in the affairs of my life, so I considered the question of Monica's future from all points of view. I decided to put aside my maternal love for the time being, and came to the conclusion that if she was to go to Saxony it would be far better for her to do so when she was a tiny girl, as no one would then be able to say I had kept her until she was old enough for me to prejudice her against her relations. I did not wish the child ever to reproach me with not giving her what the world would consider her due; and although she would probably have been very happy with me, I felt it was my duty to restore her to her father, and I can only pray that my little Monica will have a happier life as a princess than that which fell to my lot.

* * * * *

It was a great struggle to sever this last

link with my old life. I felt, however, that my husband would love Monica, and that she would not, at least, suffer from any lack of affection. This thought made the parting easier to bear, but a merciful Providence hid what the future held in store for me. I never realised that I should not be allowed to see my children again, and that their affection for me would be left to the tenacity of their early memories.

Surely a mother should not be deprived of the rights of motherhood unless strong adverse reasons prevail. Circumstances may arise which estrange husbands and wives; love may die and affection wane, but it is a cruel thing to prevent a mother from seeing her own children.

I tried to pick up the threads of my life, and present a brave face to the world, but my enemies actively continued their persecution. I desired to be protected as a *wife*, so that the tongues of slander might be silenced, and that is one of the reasons why I married Signor Toselli. With that curious mania for self-effacement which sometimes seizes the Habsburgs, I chose to marry a man who boasted no pride of ancestry, and possessed no worldly wealth.

My second marriage completely estranged my parents who, as strict Catholics, abhorred the idea, and considered that I had no right to

take such a step, as my marriage with Frederick-August had not been annulled by the Vatican.

Here ends my story so far as it concerns my more or less public life as Crown Princess of Saxony. I have endeavoured to show the world what actually went on at the Court of Dresden, and how I fared at the hands of unscrupulous enemies. I have hitherto been judged without a hearing, but now I have pleaded my own cause.

I have seen the splendour and the shadows of life; I have touched the heights of joy and walked in sorrow's depths, but I still rejoice in friends who love me, and I look forward to a brighter future.

So walking here in twilight, O my friends!
I hear your voices softened by the distance
And pause, and turn to listen, as each sends
His words of friendship, comfort and assistance.

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